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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

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TALES OF THE R.I.C.

I. THE INFORMER.

In many parts of the west of Ireland one finds small mountain farms of from five to twenty acres, generally consisting of twenty-five per cent rock, twenty-five per cent heather, and the remainder of indifferent grass-land. On such a farm a peasant will rear a large family, and how it is done is one of the mysteries of Ireland; but done it is, and often.

Patsey Mulligan was one of a family of ten, brought up on one of these farms until he was seventeen, when his father told him that it was time he thought of keeping himself, and, incidentally, of earning some money for his mother. Patsey quite agreed with his father, but soon found that it was much easier to talk of getting work in such a poor district as Cloonalla than to get it.

In the end Patsey made up his mind that the only thing to do was to go to England in search of work, and one cold winter's morning he set off from his home, in company with three other lads from the same townland, to walk the fifteen miles across the mountains and bogs to the nearest railway station at Ballybar. Arriving in England, they made their way to a town in Yorkshire, where one of them had a brother working in a coal-mine, and within three days of leaving his home in Ireland Patsey found himself a Yorkshire miner.

Hardly had he settled down to his work in the coal-mine when the war broke out, followed by a rush of young miners to enlist, amongst others Patsey Mulligan; and before he realised what he was doing, he was a full private in a famous Yorkshire regiment. Patsey had, however, enlisted in

the name of Murphy, hoping to keep his people in ignorance of the fact, knowing it would break his mother's heart if she knew he was fighting.

Patsey thoroughly enjoyed the training, and within seven months of enlisting embarked for France; and after a few weeks' pleasant life in billets, gradually moved north until finally the battalion took over trenches in the famous salient of Ypres—a great contrast to Patsey's home in the west of Ireland.

There happened to be in the battalion a young Irish subaltern by name Anthony Blake, and when Blake told his Company Sergeant-Major to find him a servant—an Irishman if possible—Patsey at once volunteered for the job, and between the two young Irishmen there soon sprang up a friendship through the common bond of danger and discomfort.

After some time Patsey learnt through one of the boys with whom he had first crossed to England that his mother was dangerously ill, and that she had repeatedly written to Patsey to come home and see her before she died, but had naturally received no answer. In his trouble he appealed to Blake, and that night found him waiting at Popperinghe Station for the leave train with a return-warrant to Ballybar in his pocket.

On his arrival at Ballybar he set out on his long fifteen-mile tramp to his home at Cloonalla, and late on a summer's evening the family of Mulligan were startled by a British soldier in full marching order walking into their home.

Before his mother died she made Patsey promise that he would not go back to France, and that he would stay at home and help his father to mind the other children. It is hard for a son to refuse his dying mother, and doubly so for an Irish boy.

When his mother's funeral was over, Patsey buried his uniform and equipment in a bog-hole at night; but his rifle he hid in the thatch of an outhouse, and it was given out in the neighbourhood that he had been discharged from the Army as medically unfit.

After the usual time Patsey was posted as a deserter in his battalion; Blake found a new servant and forgot all about his late one, while Patsey settled down to work with his father, and the memory of Blake and the British Army faded from his mind.

Though wounded three times, Blake was one of the lucky men to return home to Ireland at the end of the war, and at once set about looking for a job. The son of a country doctor in the south of Ireland, at the outbreak of war he had just left school, and had not had time to settle on a career.

But if in England it was hard for ex-officers to get employment, in Ireland it was doubly so; and Blake soon found that it was next to impossible for a man who had worn the

King's uniform to get any work or appointment. The power of Sinn Fein was beginning to be felt in the land, and though many people would have gladly employed men returned from the front, they dared not.

At last, when he had quite given up hope, he received by post an offer to join the newly-formed Auxiliary Division of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and, gladly jumping at such an offer, was soon in training at the depot in Dublin. After a tour of duty in the south, the authorities offered him a cadetship in the R.I.C., and in the course of two months Blake found himself the District Inspector at Ballybar.

At this time the R.I.C., after about as bad a hammering as any force ever received, were beginning to get their tails up again; and whereas previously no policeman dared show his face outside his barracks after dark, they were now occasionally sending out strong patrols at night-time, to the great concern of the local Sinn Feiners, who for a considerable time had had things all their own way in the south and west.

The police district of Ballybar is, like many others in the west of Ireland, large, consisting chiefly of mountains, bogs, lakes, and a few small scattered villages, some of them hidden away in the mountains—an ideal district in peace time for a D.I. who is fond of shooting and fishing, but in war time a hard district to control with the small force of police at a D.I.'s disposal.

Previous to Blake's arrival all the barracks in the district had been vacated with the exception of Ballybar and "Grouse Lodge," a small barrack at the foot of the mountains in the Cloonalla district; and as each barrack was vacated, it was blown up or burnt by the local Volunteers.

In all former rebellions in Ireland the Government have found that to get information it was only necessary to pay money. Sometimes it did not cost much, other times they had to pay generously, but always money produced information; and at the beginning of the Sinn Fein trouble the Government naturally assumed that money would produce the informers as before. But this time they were wrong, and it was only—when the Government were at their wits' end—by a lucky chance of finding important papers on a man, who was shot at night during a military raid on a Dublin hotel, that at last they received the information which enabled them to grapple successfully with Sinn Fein.

There is no doubt that the originators of Sinn Fein had read their country's history carefully, and were determined that this time there should be no informers; and to this end they organised a "Reign of Terror" throughout Ireland such as few countries have ever seen at any time in history. Their chief obstacle was the

R.I.C., and once this force was reduced to a state of inactivity —they thought they had broken it for good and all—their task appeared comparatively easy. Every man, woman, and child in the south and west of Ireland knew that if they gave any information to the police they would be shot, and shot they were.

When Blake took over his duties at Ballybar, he found that the police had no source of information whatsoever, with the result that each attack on a barrack and every ambush of a patrol came as a surprise to them. So great was the "Reign of Terror" in the Ballybar district that no person dare speak to a policeman, and the shopkeepers were afraid to serve one, even with the necessities of life.

Blake quickly realised that if he was ever to get the upper hand in his district, he must discover some source of getting information, and find it quickly, before the whole population were driven to join forces against him.

One of Sinn Fein's principles has been that the fewer who know the fewer can tell, and, as a rule, there has only been one man in a district—usually the local captain of the Volunteers—who has information of coming events; and Blake knew that his only chance of reliable news lay with this man, and with him alone.

About the only information which his men could give him of his area was that a young man, who lived in the townland of Cloonalla, named Patsey Mulligan, was the captain of the local Volunteers, and that his house was close to the barracks at Grouse Lodge; so he determined to go out to Grouse Lodge barracks and stay there until he had either come to terms with Patsey Mulligan, or saw that it was hopeless.

On a fine winter's morning Blake set out from the barracks at Ballybar in the Crossley tender with an escort of six police, the most he dared take with him for fear of weakening the Ballybar garrison. It was market-day in the little town, and all along the road to Grouse Lodge they met the country people coming in—some in horse-carts, others in ass-carts, and the poorer ones on foot—but not one of them would speak to or even look at the police, the people on foot even getting off the road into the fields directly they caught sight of the police-car approaching.

On learning from one of the constables that Mulligan's house was not on the main road to Grouse Lodge barracks, but on a byroad, Blake ordered the driver to go by this road, and when he came to Mulligan's house to stop the car and pretend that something required adjusting in his engine. After a time the driver stopped outside an ordinary thatched cottage on the side of the road, and, as Blake had expected, the inhabitants came to the door to see who it was.

The first to appear was a young man, and as the constable whispered to Blake that he was Patsey Mulligan, Blake nearly shouted for joy, for he saw that the man was none other than "Murphy," his former servant in France, and a deserter from his Majesty's Army in the field!

At once, before Patsey could get a good look at him and possibly recognise him, Blake ordered the driver to go on to the barracks as fast as the bad road would allow them.

The question now was how to get hold of Mulligan alone, and this was settled by the information which a constable at Grouse Lodge was able to give. It appeared that this plucky constable had for some time past been in the habit of slipping out of the barracks by the back entrance at night in plain clothes and returning before daybreak. He had discovered that Mulligan was in the habit of meeting a girl nearly every night at a certain lonely spot about a mile from his house; and from overhearing their conversation, had found out that Patsey wanted to marry this girl, but that she had refused to marry him until he had enough money to take her out of the country and to buy a small farm in America.

On questioning this constable, Blake was able to get a detailed account of Mulligan's movements since the time of his desertion. It appeared that for a considerable time after he came back he hardly left his home at all, contenting himself by working on his father's farm, and it was not until the Sinn Fein Volunteers were started in the district and Mulligan was elected captain that he appeared in public.

About the same time there was a report in the neighbourhood that Patsey Mulligan was courting a girl called Bridgie O'Hara, who lived in the Cloonalla district; also that another man in the same townland with money was doing his best to make her marry him.

Bridgie had two brothers in the Royal Irish Constabulary, and as the Sinn Fein movement grew stronger and the resistance of the Government weaker, the Volunteers started to boycott the O'Hara family. So savage had the boycott become lately that not a soul dared speak to them, and it was only by going to a town several miles away that they were able to obtain food.

As soon as it was dark that night Blake and the constable, both in plain clothes, slipped out at the back of the barracks and made their way to Mulligan's trysting-place. As usual, Mulligan and Bridgie met, and when they parted Blake and the constable followed Mulligan until the girl was well out of hearing, when they called on him to halt, at the same time covering him with their automatics.

Mulligan at once stopped and put up his hands, but did not speak, and while Blake continued to cover him, the con-

stable searched him for arms. Blake then ordered Mulligan to walk in front of him until they came to a mountain track which was off the road; leaving the constable on guard, he ordered Mulligan to walk up the track in front of him.

After they had gone about a hundred yards, Blake stopped and asked Mulligan if he knew that he was liable to be arrested and shot for desertion from the British Army, and waited to see the effect of his words, as the whole success of his plan depended on this.

By now Mulligan had recognised Blake's voice, and knowing well what would happen to him if he fell into the hands of the military, fell on his knees and begged Blake to spare him. Blake at once explained his terms, which the boy eagerly accepted, thankful to get off at any price, though not counting the cost and danger of what he was doing.

Blake's terms were that Mulligan should give him information well beforehand of every contemplated outrage in the district, and, in return, promised him, on behalf of the British Government, a free pardon, £500, and a passage for himself and Bridgie to any country he wished to go to, but not until the Sinn Fein movement was crushed in the district.

As it happened, only the evening before, Bridgie had told Patsey that she could not stand the boycott any longer, and that if he could not take her away to America at once she would marry Mike Connelly; hence the promise of the £500 seemed to poor Patsey like a gift from heaven.

It was arranged, in order that no suspicion should be drawn down on him, that Mulligan should leave his letter at night-time when going to meet Bridgie O'Hara under a certain large stone a few feet from where they were, near the point where the track and road met. As there was nothing more to settle, Blake told Mulligan to go home at once, while he and the constable made their way back to the barracks, and the following day Blake returned to Ballybar.

At this time Blake found that several of his men showed a strong disinclination to leave the barracks, and remembering how hard it used to be sometimes during the war to get men who had been stuck in trenches for months to go "over the top," he decided to organise strong daylight patrols so that each man should leave his barracks for a certain number of hours every day. In addition to patrols round Ballybar, he sent out a strong patrol on certain days to work its way across country—always by a different route—to Grouse Lodge Barracks, where the patrol spent the night, returning to Ballybar across country the following day.

Taking advantage of mistakes made in other parts of the country, he sent no patrols on the main routes, but made them all go across country,

only using the roads for short distances when they were open, and when it was practically impossible to be ambushed.

For some time there came no information from Mulligan, and when at last a note was brought from him from Grouse Lodge, it only contained the laconic news that the price for shooting a policeman had gone up from £60 to £100; and though no further message came from Mulligan for another ten days, as no outrages had been committed during this time, Blake had no reason to think that he was not fulfilling his part of the bargain.

Early one morning a bicycle patrol arrived at Ballybar Barracks from Grouse Lodge, and the constable who had been with Blake the night he met Mulligan handed him a note to the effect that two car-loads of arms were to arrive in the Cloonalla district that night for the purpose of an attack on Grouse Lodge Barracks the following night. Mulligan gave the route the cars would take, but did not state at what hour they might be expected.

On looking at an Ordnance map, Blake noticed that the cars would have to pass through a small wood, and that the road took a sharp bend where it entered the wood. Taking a leaf out of the Sinn Feiners' book, he determined to ambush the cars at the bend, and to try and seize cars and arms.

The difficulty was to know what to do with the cars once they had gained possession of them. The Volunteers would no doubt collect in the Cloonalla district to take over the arms, hence it would be dangerous to attempt to take them to Grouse Lodge Barracks, which was much the nearer barrack to the proposed scene of the ambush; so in the end he settled, if he came off victorious, to take the cars by byroads to Ballybar and risk being attacked in the town at night. A few days before this Blake had received his first batch of "Black and Tans," bringing his force up to a respectable number, so felt quite justified in making the attempt.

As soon as it was dark that night, Blake with five of his men left Grouse Lodge, and made their way by the starlight across country to the wood. The men brought axes with them, and soon had the road blocked with two small fir-trees, after which they took cover on each side of the road and waited.

At ten the moon rose and the night still remained fine, but it was not until after two that they heard the cars approaching. The leading car came round the bend at a good pace, pulling up just clear of the barricade, while the second car, failing to see the obstacle on the road, was unable to pull up in time, and ran into the back of the leading car.

Blake at once stood up and called on the men—there were two in each car—to put up their hands; but for answer they opened fire with auto-

matics in the direction of Blake's voice, whereupon the police fired a volley at the cars, and three of the men were seen to collapse, after which the fourth put up his hands.

They found that two of the men were dead, while the third was shot through the chest. After removing all papers and arms from the dead men, they hid their bodies in the wood, removed the trees from the road, and started off to Ballybar, where they arrived without mishap, and soon had the two cars safely in the barrack-yard.

On investigation they found that the cars contained thirty carbines and rifles, several thousand rounds of ammunition, and two boxes of home-made bombs.

This capture had a great effect on the police *morale* in the district, and, in fact, marked the turning-point in the Sinn Fein campaign in that area, while the two captured cars made a welcome addition to the police transport.

Shortly afterwards Blake received a warning from Mulligan to expect an attack on a named night on the barracks in Ballybar, and that an attempt would be made to blow up the gable-end of the barracks. The night before the expected attack Blake brought all the men that could be spared with safety from Grouse Lodge, and made his preparations for defence.

The attack opened with heavy rifle-fire from all the surrounding houses, which drove the unfortunate inhabitants of Ballybar in terror from the town, and after an hour a determined rush was made under heavy covering fire to ram the barrack door; but the fire of the police forced them to drop the ram and run for shelter. Only one attempt was made to blow up the gable, the police allowing the attackers to start laying the gelignite, and then dropping a Mills bomb from the window above, where a projecting V-shaped steel shutter had been put up, with deadly effect.

After this the attackers kept up an intermittent rifle-fire for another two hours, and towards daybreak withdrew, leaving the police victorious; and although several men had been seen to fall during the attempt to ram the door, by the time it was light their bodies had been removed.

A subsequent attack on Grouse Lodge Barracks was also successfully beaten off without any police casualties; but an attempt Blake made to capture an important Volunteer staff-officer in the Cloonalla district one night failed—the bird had flown a quarter of an hour before the patrol surrounded the house where he had been staying.

This attempt to seize the staff-officer convinced the Volunteers that there was a traitor in the district, and a Volunteer intelligence officer was sent

down forthwith from Dublin to investigate.

Blake now felt that he was really beginning to break the Sinn Fein in his district, and decided to take the offensive to the full extent of his power. Not only did he have the town and country patrolled night and day, but he also sent out parties of "Black and Tans" to search houses in the country for suspected stores of arms, and also to try and obtain information by all means in their power.

Though at this time the people were beginning to get restive under the Sinn Fein tyranny, yet so great was the terror that not a single person in the whole district dared to give the police one word of information of his own will; and though the information from Mulligan was of vital importance as regards attacks and movements by the Volunteers, yet Blake was still in complete ignorance of the names of the most dangerous Sinn Feiners.

Blake felt that he was winning, but he knew that there would be no peace or rest in his district until he had arrested the leaders: the others would then be like sheep without a shepherd. To this end an interview with Mulligan was necessary, in order to get from him the names of these leaders.

This time Blake waylaid Mulligan as he was going to meet Bridgie O'Hara, and at once saw that the boy's nerve was fast breaking. Mulligan gave him the names and addresses he wanted readily enough, and then implored Blake to have him arrested at once and taken to a place of safety, as he was in terror of his life.

He told Blake that the Volunteers were already suspicious of him, and that an intelligence officer had been specially sent down from Dublin to watch him and report on the leakage of information, and that he could not stick it any longer. Blake, knowing that once Mulligan was removed, he would not get any information at all, managed after a long argument to persuade him to carry on a little longer, by promising to arrest him when the other leaders were taken.

After parting from Blake the unhappy Mulligan met his girl, who by this time was half-mad from the misery of the boycott of her family. In despair she told him she had made up her mind to marry Connelly, and they would sail for America as soon as they could get passports.

Patsey, at the end of his tether and racked with terror, implored her to wait a little longer, saying that very soon he would have £500, and directly he got the money he would take her away.

The girl went home in the seventh heaven of delight, forgot all about the promises of silence she had made to Patsey, and told her mother, who, of course, told her husband, and

it was not many days before the good news was common property in the district. A few days afterwards the intelligence officer returned to his H.Q.'s —his mission was fulfilled.

Having got the ringleaders' names, Blake at once set about his plans for arresting them, realising that not until they were safe under lock and key could he truthfully say that he had won; but it is one thing to arrest two or three men, and quite a different story to arrest thirty or forty, as, if not all arrested at the same time, the majority would get warning and disappear on the run.

Once again Blake met Mulligan at night, and arranged with him to call a meeting of the ringleaders the following Sunday at early Mass outside a wayside chapel in the Cloonalla district, when he proposed to arrest them, and promised Mulligan he would be separated from the others at once and conveyed to England on a destroyer. At first Mulligan refused, being now demented with the fear of assassination, but when promised the payment of the £500 on his arrival in England, he consented.

Blake arranged that on the following Sunday morning as many men as could be spared should be sent from Grouse Lodge and Ballybar Barracks to meet near the Cloonalla chapel at the same time, when he hoped to surround the crowd and make the arrests without any difficulty.

On a typical soft Irish morning Blake and his men set out early from Ballybar Barracks on their drive to the chapel, full of hope that the day's work would clinch his victory, and that then he would apply for leave, as the strain of the last few months was beginning to tell on him, and he needed a rest badly.

When the Crossley was within half a mile of the chapel and still out of view from there, Blake stopped the car, got out his men, and proceeded to surround the chapel, while Blake himself advanced alone towards the chapel gates. When he drew near he could see that the road in front of the gates was a mass of country people, who did not move until Blake got close to them, when they divided, forming a lane towards the gates.

And to his last day Blake will never forget the sight which met his eyes as he advanced through the people in a deathly silence. Lashed to one of the pillars of the chapel gates was the body of the unfortunate Patsey Mulligan with two bullet-holes through his forehead, and pinned on his chest a sheet of white paper bearing the single word TRAITOR, while at his feet lay poor Bridgie O'Hara, her body heaving with sobs, and her long dark hair, which had been cut off, lying on the ground beside her.

II. ON THE RUN.

Paddy Flanagan stood in the doorway of his small shop in the main street of the mean and dirty little village of Ballyfrack, watching the rain coming down in torrents, while he listened with one ear to his wife arguing with a countrywoman in the shop behind him over the price of eggs, and with his other ear for the high-pitched sound of a powerful car.

Presently the woman in the shop, having sold her eggs and bought provisions, wrapped her shawl over her head and started to make her way home. As Paddy moved aside to let the woman out, his ear caught the dreaded sound he was expecting, growing louder every second, and culminating in a shower-bath of mud as two Crossley tenders, full of Auxiliary Cadets, dashed past the shop and disappeared as suddenly as they had come.

Hardly had the noise of the engines died away than Paddy's quick ear caught the sound of cars approaching again, and two Ford cars—the first carrying a huge coffin and the second apparently mourners—drew up at the small hotel almost opposite Paddy's shop.

Some two years previously Flanagan had become a rabid Sinn Feiner—he had previously been as rabid a Nationalist—with a keen eye to business. For a long time it looked as though Sinn Fein was the only horse in the race, and the dream of an Irish Republic seemed more than likely to become a reality; lately, however, the British Government had been sitting up and taking a quite unnecessary interest in Ireland.

First, the British Government had formed the Auxiliary Division—"those cursed pups of Cromwell," as Paddy described them to his friends, while Mrs Paddy used to say that the Government had recruited them from all the prisons and asylums in England; then, to crown all, the Government had had the audacity to put several counties within easy reach of Ballyfrack under martial law.

So far Paddy had carried on the war for freedom with words only, but a week before this story starts he had found to his great alarm that he would be called upon for deeds. On a dark Sunday night, just as the Flanagans were preparing to go to bed, there came two short sharp knocks at the shop door, followed by a long one.

Now Paddy had always had a great dread of night work, and swore that come what might he would not open his door to any man, be he policeman or Sinn Feiner: for a minute there was a tense silence in the stuffy dark shop, save for the heavy breathing of Mrs Flanagan, broken suddenly

by a blow which threatened to break in the street door, and a loud voice called out to Flanagan to open in the name of the Irish Republican Army.

"God save us," said Mrs Flanagan, and dived under the bed; and Paddy would have liked to follow his wife, but he had heard of the unpleasant results which always followed a refusal to open to the I.R.A. Before another blow could be struck on the door he had it open, and at once three dark figures slipped into the shop, the last one closing the door.

And in the darkness of the shop Paddy Flanagan listened to his fate: it seemed that in the adjoining county, where martial law had recently been proclaimed, the military were making life quite unbearable for the Volunteers, and the Auxiliaries had openly declared that they would shoot John O'Hara—the chief assassin of policemen in that county—at sight.

Before Flanagan could realise the horror of the situation, two of the men had disappeared into the night, and he found himself face to face with the notorious John O'Hara, with instructions to pass him on without fail to the port of Ballybor (some eighty miles), where O'Hara would be smuggled on board a vessel bound for England.

It was some considerable time before Flanagan could induce his wife to come out from under the bed and produce a meal for O'Hara. Before they went to sleep his wife reminded Flanagan—quite unnecessarily—of the fate which the Auxiliaries and "Black and Tans" had assigned to any one who gave shelter or help to John O'Hara.

For days past Paddy had been racking his brains, spurred on by the laments of his wife, how to get rid of O'Hara, and every day the danger seemed to grow greater, until at last Paddy could stand it no longer.

The outstanding feature in a western peasant's character is always curiosity, and the longer Paddy stood in the doorway of his shop gazing at the coffin on the car, the greater his curiosity became. He had never seen so big a coffin; if there was a man inside he must be the "devil of a fellow and all," but perhaps it might be a woman—until at last the coffin drew him as a magnet draws a needle.

A close inspection of the two cars told him nothing, so there only remained to go inside in the hope of meeting the occupants. Inside the hotel he found the mourners seated round the fire in a back room, drinking porter and discussing the disappearance of John O'Hara, and after ordering a drink he drew a chair up to the fire and joined in the general conversation.

Paddy soon found out that the coffin contained the body of a policeman who had been murdered in a recent ambush in the adjoining county, and his relatives were bringing his

body home, a village close to Ballybor. Probably the name of the town gave Paddy the idea, but in a flash he saw his way clear to get rid of O'Hara, and that at once—if a dead policeman could be taken in the coffin to Ballybor, why not the live John O'Hara?

For the next two hours Paddy plied the relations of the dead policeman with porter, whisky, and poteen, and by that time had learnt all he wanted to know: they had permits to the police for the two cars to travel to Ballybor, they were all strong and noisy patriots (in spite of the murdered policeman outside), and were as ready as the next man to turn an honest penny.

Now Flanagan, being no fool, knew that no sane man—drunk or sober—would take upon himself the responsibility of John O'Hara unless he was forced to, and bearing this in mind during the negotiations which followed, he used the threat of the magic letters "I.R.A." freely — pretending that he himself was a member of the dreaded Inner Circle. In the end, after much drink and a lot of haggling, it was settled that the cars should be taken into the hotel yard for the night.

Then, during the night, the policeman's body was to be removed to a hay-loft and buried secretly the following night, under arrangements to be made by Flanagan, in a bog outside the village, where several unfortunate Volunteers, who had fallen in an attack on the local police barracks, were buried. Meanwhile the hotel boots, who was a carpenter by trade, would make ventilation holes in the coffin, and the "funeral" party would set off for Ballybor before daybreak.

The last part of the negotiations resembled the selling of a horse at a fair, and the price he had to pay sobered Flanagan and nearly turned his hair white,—not one yard would they go with O'Hara until they got £100; but by now Flanagan was desperate, and if they had demanded £200 he would have paid it.

At last all the details were settled, and Flanagan went home to warn O'Hara of his coming journey in the coffin: the thought that in a few hours he would be free of the man for good and all made life worth living again.

But his joy was short-lived. On entering the kitchen he found four long-haired young men making a hearty meal—more victims of British tyranny, all on the run for the murder of policemen—and his heart sank at the thought that there would probably be more to follow: in fact his house was being used as a clearing-house for all the "wanted" men of the adjoining county.

Flanagan woke up O'Hara, told him of the arrangements which had been made to get him to Ballybor, and added that four more men had just turned up, and that it failed him to know how to pass them on. O'Hara

thought for a moment, and replied, "Sure it's easily known how—why wouldn't they do for the mourners?"

As soon as O'Hara was ready, and the young men could be persuaded to stop eating, the party set out for the hotel in order to get away before the mourners woke up. O'Hara took command, found out that one of his companions could drive a Ford, but that none of them had any idea of how to get to Ballybor, and told Flanagan that the driver of the coffin-car would have to go with them as a guide.

On arrival at the hotel Flanagan roused the boots, O'Hara gave his instructions about the driver, and they then proceeded to the bedrooms of the poteen-logged mourners, who offered no protest while O'Hara removed their topcoats and hats for his companions, Flanagan seizing the opportunity of transferring his £100 from the sleeping chief mourner's trousers pocket to his own again.

By the light of a guttering candle O'Hara was packed into the coffin, and in the darkness of a raw early morning the two cars pulled out of the hotel yard, and disappeared down the road which leads to Ballybor. Flanagan, with a sigh of relief, wiped his forehead, and prayed that he might never see O'Hara in this world again, and went home feeling ten years younger, but determined not to be at home when the mourners got busy and came for an explanation.

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On the morning O'Hara left Ballyfrack in the coffin, Blake had motored to the town of Dunallen to see his County Inspector. On his way back, about fourteen miles from Ballybor, the road leads over a narrow bridge and up a steep hill with a sharp blind turn at the top.

As Blake swung his car, all out, round this corner, he saw about fifty yards in front two Ford cars standing in the road, the leading car with a huge coffin tied across the body of the car, and round the other car a group of young men. Pulling up his car, he sounded his horn, as he had not room to pass, but with no effect.

Blake, who was in mufti, had with him an orderly in plain clothes, and being in a hurry told him to go and tell the driver to go on. As the orderly returned, both cars started up and went on. Once started, they went as fast as Blake could wish, and for some miles the three cars kept close together until they reached a village about ten miles from Ballybor.

Here the main road to Ballybor appears to carry straight on through the village, but this only leads into a cul-de-sac—what looks like a side road on the left of the main street being the Ballybor turning. The two strange cars passed the turning, while Blake, once

round the corner, made for home at full speed.

He thought no more of the cars, but after they had gone about a mile the orderly asked him if he had ever seen such a big coffin before. Blake replied that he had not noticed the size of the coffin, and they both relapsed into silence again, Blake concentrating his attention on getting back to Ballybor before dark.

Meanwhile the orderly was thinking the matter out, and came to the conclusion that the coffin party was not above suspicion. At this time, when the railway strike was on in the west, it was not unusual to see a coffin on a car; but, unless the coffin party belonged to the village, they must be strangers to the district, or they would not have run into the cul-de-sac.

When about three miles from Ballybor they had a puncture, and just as Blake finished changing wheels, the cars of the coffin party drew up about fifty yards behind, and three men advanced towards them. Blake, who was still quite unsuspicious, thought that the men were going to ask him to let them pass, and at once started up his car and got in.

The orderly, whose suspicions were now turned to certainties, drew his revolver, covered the advancing men, and called on them to halt; whereupon the three men opened fire, and the orderly replied.

Blake yelled to him to jump in, and as the man swung himself into the seat beside him, he let the car go, while the men on the road continued to fire. Luckily the light was by now nearly gone, and beyond a broken wind-screen they got away with a good start.

It now developed into a race, Blake striving to reach the barracks for reinforcements to stop the funeral party before they could get clear of Ballybor, and the others to reach the first turning they came to off the main road.

Blake switched on his lights and drove for his life, down hill as fast as the car would go and round corners on two wheels, with the result that in rounding one blind corner they nearly ran into a party of Auxiliary Cadets, whose Crossley had broken down. The Cadets naturally opened fire without asking any questions—a car going that pace in the dusk on a country road in the west of Ireland nowadays is asking for it—and again Blake and his orderly narrowly escaped being shot.

Blake clapped on his brakes, yelled out "R.I.C."; the orderly held his hands high above his head, and the Auxiliaries gave them the benefit of the doubt. Luckily the leader of the Cadets recognised Blake, the situation was quickly explained, and they took cover on both sides of the road at the corner.

Hardly were they in position when the coffin-car rounded the corner, and the Cadets opened fire; but so great was the impetus of the car,

and so bad the brakes, that it crashed into the rear of Blake's car, the coffin pitched on to the road, burst open, and out rolled a huge wild-looking man.

The second car must have closed up with the leading one as the darkness came on, for no sooner had the first car crashed than the second one ran into it, overturned, and pinned the big man to the road; whereupon Blake shouted hands up, but the men started to run back, and the Cadets at once opened fire.

Three of them fell, but the fourth managed to get round the corner, and Blake sent two Cadets after him. The driver of the coffin-car had fallen clear, and, to avoid the Cadets' bullets, ran round the Crossley, straight into the driver's arms.

As soon as the firing ceased, Blake made for the big man; the Cadets lifted the car, and flashed a torch on his face.

Only that morning Blake had been reading a full account of O'Hara, and had studied an excellent photograph of him, and as the electric light shone on the man's face, he realised the importance of the capture —the most-wanted man in the west.

The Cadets rendered first aid to the three wounded men, while Blake handcuffed O'Hara and placed him in the back of his own car, telling his orderly to watch him closely, and to keep him covered with his revolver. In the meantime the two Cadets had returned, having failed to capture the fourth man.

Blake was now most anxious to get O'Hara safely in the Ballybor barracks, but nothing would induce the Crossley to start. At last, after an hour's delay, they got the engine going, and the whole party got under way, the Cadets taking the three wounded prisoners in the tender, and Blake, in his own car with his orderly, guarding O'Hara.

The distance to Ballybor was short, but the delay had made Blake very uneasy, knowing that the local Volunteers would surely try and rescue O'Hara if they got word of his capture. Ahead of them was a thick wood on both sides of the road, and once past this the betting was in their favour.

They started without lights, but when they reached the outskirts of the wood the darkness was so intense that the Crossley driver switched on his lights and tried to rush the place. Blake was forced to follow his example, or get left hopelessly behind.

Faster and faster went the tender, bumping and skidding over the wet bog road, the lamps throwing a brilliant ring of white light in front of the car, the rest inky dark. When they had passed more than half-way through the wood, and Blake was beginning to think that they were safe, the Crossley suddenly began to pull up with a screech of brakes, drowned by a volley of shots from both sides of the wood.

The driver kept his head, switched off his lights, and the dreadful fight started in the black darkness of the wood. Blake turned his lights off and started to back his car, but in the darkness and excitement ran her into the ditch at the side of the road, where she overturned.

He shot clear of the car, and on regaining the road realised that at present it was useless to try and get away with his prisoner, so he shouted to his orderly to guard O'Hara until the fight was over, and went forward to help the Auxiliaries.

Blake found them lying down on each side of the road, firing at the flashes of the ambushers' guns, while the leader and driver were struggling to remove the barricade of timber and big stones across the road under a hail of bullets and shot. By this time a Cadet had got a Lewis gun into action, and at once sprayed the edge of the wood on each side of the road with a magazine. Promptly the ambushers' fire died down, and after two more heavy bursts of fire from the Lewis gun their fire ceased. The Cadets quickly switched on the lights of the Crossley, and started to clear away the barricade.

Blake suddenly thought of O'Hara, and ran back to his car to find that he had completely vanished, the orderly lying pinned to the ground by the overturned car, unconscious.

The only chance now of recapturing O'Hara was to push on to Ballybor as fast as possible, collect all the police available, and search the country round the scene of the ambush. Without a motor it would be impossible for the fugitive to get far during the next few hours.

But again the Crossley jibbed, and again a priceless hour or more was wasted before the barricade could be removed and the car induced to start. Nearly another hour was spent in reaching the barracks, getting out the men, and starting on the hunt.

Until long after dawn they beat the country within a large radius of the fatal wood, using powerful acetylene lamps, but to no avail: neither in the open country nor in any village could they find any sign or get any tidings of the missing prisoner.

As soon as the light was good, Blake climbed a tree on some high ground which overlooked the country, and searched in vain with a powerful pair of Zeiss glasses. At last, thoroughly exhausted, the police returned to Ballybor, beaten.

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When Blake's car upset in the wood, O'Hara had the good luck to fall clear, and to roll into the ditch at the side of the road. Here he lay still for several minutes until he saw what move the orderly would make. When the shooting slackened for a few seconds he could distinctly hear the groans of the orderly pinned

under the car, and at once realised that if he could only crawl into the wood he might be free again.

With great difficulty he managed to drag himself out of the ditch and over the bank, only to find another and deeper ditch on the far side. Along this ditch he made his way until he judged that he must be close to the attackers; then he wriggled into the wood, and lay down to await further developments.

O'Hara was now afraid to go nearer to the ambushers, lest they should mistake him for a Cadet; but before he could make up his mind what to do the firing died down, and he could hear the attackers retiring through the wood. Realising that his only hope lay with these men, he got up and rushed after them, being mistaken in the darkness and confusion for one of themselves.

Once clear of the wood, O'Hara found himself close to one of the attackers, and while they ran explained to him who he was, and learnt that the ambush had been organised in a village close to by the man who had escaped from the two Cadets.

On reaching this village the handcuffs were soon filed off O'Hara's wrists, two bicycles provided, and in a few minutes he was on his way to Ballybor with a guide who took him along a byroad. It was essential if he was to catch the steamer the next day that he should hide that night in Ballybor, and the chances were that the police would never think of O'Hara hiding in the town, practically within the shadow of the police barracks.

Owing to the delay in starting the Crossley, O'Hara and his guide were actually in Ballybor before the police: as they neared the turning to the barracks they could see the lights of the Crossley behind them. Passing through the town they made their way to the quay, where it was arranged that O'Hara should spend the night with a Volunteer called Devine, from whose house it was hoped that he would be able to pass on to the steamer next day in the company of the stoker.

At this time the police, except in strong force, did not leave the barracks at night, and it was thought quite safe for O'Hara to remain in Devine's house. After a change of clothes and some food, he retired to bed, hoping that his troubles were nearly over.

Early the next morning Devine woke O'Hara up with the bad news that a picket of Cadets guarded the approach to the steamer, and that the game was up. On looking out of the window O'Hara could see a sentry with fixed bayonet on each side of the gangway, while others were resting in the small weighing-house on the quay-side.

O'Hara, who a second before had been confident of escape, was in despair, and collapsed

on the bed. After a few minutes he pulled himself together, and on looking at Devine was at once struck by the sinister expression on the man's face.

Remembering that there was a price of £1000 on his head, and from Devine's expression there was no doubt that he also was thinking of this reward, without a second's hesitation O'Hara covered him with a big Colt automatic, and told him that if a way was not found to get him on to the steamer he would shoot him. Devine, knowing O'Hara's reputation, and preferring his life to £1000, at once suggested a plan.

The town of Ballybor lies about five miles up a river, and all outward-bound steamers drop the pilot in the bay at the mouth of the river, where he is rowed to the little fishing village of Dooncarra. The steamer was due to sail at high tide that afternoon, and Devine suggested that they should bicycle to Dooncarra, where there ought to be no difficulty in getting O'Hara aboard by the pilot-boat, as both the police barracks and coastguard station there had been burnt some time ago.

After some breakfast they started off, bicycled boldly past the picket on the quay, and reached Dooncarra without any mishap, where Devine arranged for O'Hara to stay in a fisherman's house until the pilot-boat left at dusk.

O'Hara had never been to sea before, and was ill before he ever reached the steamer. As soon as he got aboard, a stoker, who had been warned by Devine to expect O'Hara on the pilot's boat, took charge of him, and at once put him into a bunk.

That night the steamer ran into an Atlantic storm, and by the time they had made the north coast of Ireland, O'Hara was beyond caring whether he lived or died.

Blake reported O'Hara's escape to the authorities in Dublin, who were most anxious to secure the man, knowing he had been the ringleader in the worst atrocities committed in the south recently. They at once came to the conclusion that O'Hara was trying to get away by boat from Ballybor to Liverpool and then on to America, hence the picket of Cadets on the quay; but to make doubly sure they ordered an ocean-going destroyer to search the steamer from Ballybor at sea.

After rounding the north of Ireland the steamer ran into smooth water, and O'Hara came on deck for a breath of fresh air. After a time he became interested in a queer-looking long grey steamer which was approaching them from the south, and very soon the queer boat came within hailing distance, and orders were megaphoned for the steamer to heave to.

O'Hara was greatly interested in watching the progress of the destroyer boat, and it

was not until a sergeant of the R.I.C. in plain clothes, who had known O'Hara in the south, covered him with a Webly and commanded him to put up his hands, that he realised that this interesting show was all for his benefit.

III. THE LANDING OF ARMS.

It was the busy hour of the evening in Stephen Foy's public-house in the small western town of Ballybor, and Larry O'Halloran, the barman, never ceased drawing corks and measuring out "half ones" of whisky for the endless flow of customers.

Larry was a good example of a new type of Irishman which the Sinn Fein movement has produced—a type regarded with sorrow and amazement by the older generation, and at present unknown in England. Whatever faults an Irishman possessed, he always had the saving virtues of wit and cheerfulness.

Probably the British have been the last nation in the world to recognise the great value of clever propaganda, but there is no doubt that the originators of the Sinn Fein movement knew the great influence of judicious propaganda —they had efficient instructors in the Boches — and wisely started at the beginning, that is, with the children at school, and the result is sadly apparent in the south and west of Ireland to-day in the hatred of the British Empire among the young people; and so obsessed are they with this hatred that they have neglected to learn the good manners of their elders.

While Larry's hands never ceased serving out drink, his brain—trained from childhood to one end only—never ceased running on one subject, how and when to obtain arms to defeat the British. Only the previous evening Larry had achieved the ambition of his young life, when he was elected captain by a large majority of the Volunteers in place of Patsey Mulligan, who had been tried by court-martial and executed for treachery to the Irish Republican Army.

Larry, in spite of his long hair and dreamy Celtic eyes, was no fool, and knew quite well that a battalion of Volunteers without arms was about as much use for fighting as a mob of old women with umbrellas, and that if ever they were to fight the British with any chance of success, they must have arms, and not only rifles, but machine-guns.

Previous to this, by a system of raids at night, every known shot-gun in the district had been collected by the Volunteers; but Larry realised that to send a Volunteer, armed with a single-barrel shot-gun, to fight a British infantryman armed with a magazine rifle, was only a good example of

the old saying of sending a boy on a man's errand.

While Larry was racking his brains how to obtain arms, a youth, obviously an American, walked in, accompanied by a strange countryman, and proceeded to a small private room at the back of the house. But though Larry's thoughts were far away, trying to get Mausers in Germany, his eyes were busy in the public-house, and as the couple disappeared into the room, he saw at once that the countryman's walk was the walk of a soldier.

Larry knew the boy, Micky Fee, well. His father was a wealthy Irish-American, who, amongst other business, owned an arms factory in the States, and had refused the request of the Inner Brotherhood repeatedly to send arms to Ireland for the Volunteers.

It was possible both to oversee and to overhear what went on in the inner room. Larry saw the couple sitting there in close conversation, and in a few minutes realised that the strange countryman was in reality a British Secret Service agent, and that Micky, who had drink taken, was giving the man all the information of the local Volunteers he could.

It did not take Larry long to determine what course to take with the Secret Service agent, and he had decided on the same fate for Micky Fee, when he suddenly realised that his prayers had been answered. His quick brain began to work out how many rifles, machine-guns, automatics, and bombs Fee's father would value the life of his only child at; the more he thought of it, the higher he made the figures.

Micky had been on a visit to his grandparents in Ballybor for some months past, and had taken an active interest in the Volunteers. About 2 A.M. the next morning there came a loud knock at the grand-parents' house. When the old man opened the door he found himself looking into the muzzles of a ring of guns, and in a few minutes Master Micky left for an unknown destination.

About a fortnight later Michael Fee and his wife received the shock of their lives when they opened their letters at breakfast one morning. Among Fee's was one bearing the Ballybor postmark, which stated briefly that his son had been tried by a court-martial of the I.R.A. on a charge of giving information to the enemy and condemned to death, and that the sentence would be duly carried out unless Michael Fee presented so many rifles, pistols, machine-guns, bombs, and ammunition to the I.R.A.

The letter also stated that Mr Fee's answer was to be sent to a named Sinn Fein agent in New York within seven days of the receipt of the letter, who would give him a time-limit for handing over the arms, and would also tell him where the arms were to be landed. A P.S. was added suggesting that Fee should bring the arms to Ireland in a

yacht, and that he would be able to take his son back to the States in her.

For many months the Irish papers had been full of accounts of men taken from their beds in the dead of night and executed outside their homes by armed and masked men; also of the bodies of missing men being found in a field, days after they had disappeared, riddled with bullets. Some of the Irish newspapers tried to throw the blame for these murders on the forces of the Crown by saying that the men wore "trench coats," but never adding that practically every young man in Ireland nowadays wears a so-called trench-coat.

Fee knew that many of these murders were "executions" of men who had given information to the police, and the thought that one morning at breakfast he or his wife might open an Irish paper to read an account of the finding of their son's body riddled with bullets, caused him to break out into a cold sweat. Being a good business man, Fee made up his mind at once, and that evening found him in New York making arrangements with the Sinn Fein agent for the immediate shipment of the arms to Ireland.

It's one thing to talk of smuggling arms into Ireland, but quite another story to accomplish it. To the Irish peasant, who has never been outside his own country, it looks as easy as falling off a log; but then he has no idea of the power of the British Navy, and the British Government does not take the trouble to inform an Irish peasant that it has the finest navy in the world—he is supposed to know this, or to find it out for himself.

When Fee asked the agent for his suggestions, the agent trotted out the usual stock dodges—packing rifles in piano-frames, S.A.A. in bags of flour, and more equally futile plans, and he quickly realised that the man was a fool, so left him and retired to his room in the hotel to think out a plan for himself.

For a long time he could think of nothing but the picture of his son's body lying in a vivid green field in his native land: he could even see the clothes Micky was wearing, and the dirty white handkerchief (he was quite sure it would be dirty) over his eyes. For hours his mind dwelt on this picture, but in the end he gained control over himself, and before he turned in his brain had evolved a sound plan of action, and with an Irishman's sanguine temperament he fell asleep, thinking that his boy was as good as at home already.

The following morning Fee went to a big yacht agent, but found that he had only a steam yacht for charter. He explained that he wanted a motor yacht big enough to cross the Atlantic, and the man referred him to a firm of builders who had a yacht of this description, which he believed was on the verge of completion.

Fee next made his way to the yard of these builders, where he found the yacht he was looking for, which had been built for a rich American who had recently died. He soon came to terms, and arranged with the builders for the addition of large extra oil-tanks, in order that the yacht would be able to make the double journey to Ireland and back without having to take in oil there.

As soon as the yacht was ready for sea, Fee had large man-holes fitted to the extra oil-tanks, packed the arms inside them, and then filled up with oil. Within four weeks of the receipt of Larry O'Halloran's letter, Mr and Mrs Fee sailed on their new motor yacht, the *Colleen*, for a pleasure trip to their native land of Ireland.

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The place chosen for the landing of the arms is one of the most beautiful places in the British Isles, and one of the least known. If you picture the wildest Norwegian fjord, and add square miles of mountain, cliffs, moors, bogs, lakes, and rivers, you may get some idea of the scenery.

Before leaving America Fee cabled to his parents in Ballybor that he expected to be in Ireland on a certain date, knowing that the information would reach Larry through friends in the Post Office, and that he would take the necessary steps to meet the yacht at Errinane on that date, with the result that Larry passed the information on to the Volunteers in the Errinane district, and in a short time every coastguard station and police barracks within a twelve-mile radius of the landing-place was burnt.

On a fine September day the M.Y. *Colleen* sighted the west coast of Ireland, and shortly afterwards made her way up the wonderful natural harbour which leads to the little fishing village of Errinane, where she dropped anchor and came to rest after her long voyage across the Atlantic. In a few minutes a boat left the quay, and Larry stepped aboard the yacht, and after explaining to the Fees that he had arrived in the district two days previously with their son Micky, insisted that the arms should be landed that night; but Fee refused, on the grounds that the British Navy was bound to know of the yacht's arrival, and that if they attempted to land the arms that night they might be caught by a destroyer.

A hot argument ensued—Larry, now that at last the arms were almost within his grasp, being mad keen to get them ashore at once. However, the argument was cut short by a shout from the deck that a destroyer was coming up the harbour, and Fee had great difficulty to induce Larry to leave the yacht.

The destroyer came to an anchor within fifty yards of the *Colleen*, and Fee could see two machine-guns on the bridge trained to sweep the yacht's

deck. Before the rattle of the anchor-chain had died away a boat was lowered, and in a few minutes a party of bluejackets, headed by a lieutenant, came aboard the yacht.

Fee explained to this officer that he was an Irishman living in America, and that he had come over on a visit to his parents. The officer examined the yacht's papers, and then gave orders to his men, who proceeded to search the yacht thoroughly: mattresses were opened, all panelling taken down by ship-carpenters, floors lifted, luggage searched, and even the oil-tanks sounded, while the taps were turned on to see if they contained oil.

After three hours' searching the sailors left the yacht, and within half an hour the destroyer put to sea. Hardly had she disappeared when Larry came aboard again, and as it was nearly dark by now, he tried to insist on starting to land the arms, and again Fee refused.

The yacht settled down for the night, but soon after midnight a powerful searchlight was flashed on to her, and again the bluejackets came aboard and searched the yacht from top to bottom. Eventually they left, the searchlight was turned off, and the destroyer could be heard putting out to sea.

Larry's original plan had been to land the arms on the north side of the bay, and to hide them in some caves in the mountains, where French arms had been hidden during the rebellion of 1798, then to await a favourable opportunity to remove them to Ballybor. However, the night the destroyer left the local fishermen filled their boats with herrings, which Larry found had all been bought by the big shopkeeper in Errinane, who intended sending them to Ballybor Station the next morning in his three Ford trucks. Not daring to land the arms during the day, Larry commandeered the lorries, and as soon as it was dark landed the arms openly at Errinane quay, packed them in the largest fish-boxes he could find, and loaded the boxes on to the lorries, putting boxes of herrings on top. The arms once landed, he restored Micky to his parents on the yacht, and within half an hour the reunited Fee family were on their way back to America.

Not long after the yacht had started, the lorries left Errinane on the long run through the mountains to Ballybor. When about fifteen miles from Errinane, Larry halted his convoy in a mountain pass, in order to let one of the drivers repair a tyre.

Hardly had they stopped when the lights of two cars were seen behind them, descending the road into the pass from the direction of Errinane. Larry knew at once that they could only be police cars, and must have been sent to Errinane on the suspicion that arms had been landed from the yacht.

He at once got his lorries on the move, going in the last one himself, and in a few minutes could hear the hoot of the oncoming cars close behind. Ahead of them lay miles of narrow bog road, and as long as he kept the rear lorry in the middle of the road, the police cars would not be able to stop them.

Soon he could hear shouts of halt, followed shortly afterwards by a volley of rifle bullets, but Larry and the driver were well protected by the boxes on the lorry. So they continued for about two miles, the police firing volley after volley at the lorry.

So far so good; but though Larry knew he could keep the police from overhauling them for several miles, yet he knew that in the end the police must defeat him, unless he could find some means of stopping them, and the only way to do this was by sacrificing the rear lorry. This he made up his mind to do, as the lorry only carried the bombs; but the difficulty was to stop the police altogether.

The idea which saved them came from the driver, who knew every yard of the road, and reminded Larry that half a mile ahead of them there was an arched bridge over a mountain river, the very place to block the road.

Larry climbed out on the boxes, and with great difficulty extracted a bomb; returning to the driving seat, they waited until the lorry was on the bridge, when they stopped the engine and started to run for the lorry in front. When they had gone about twenty yards, Larry stopped, flung the bomb at the lorry on the bridge, and ran like a hare.

Luckily there was a steep rise beyond the bridge, and just as they reached the slow-moving lorry a flame of fire shot up from the bridge followed by a deafening explosion. They learnt afterwards that the bridge was completely wrecked, the leading police car badly damaged, and that the police took three hours to return to Errinane, having to back their cars for several miles before they could turn.

The original plan was to hide the arms in a saw-mill in Ballybor, owned by a notorious loyalist, which fact would divert all suspicion from the mill; but Larry knew that after the encounter with the police the hue-and-cry would be up, and that the Auxiliaries would search every rat-hole in Ballybor before many hours were past.

On reaching Ballybor in the early hours they proceeded to the mill, which was situated on the bank of the river, and at once unloaded; but instead of hiding the arms there Larry ordered the men to carry them straight to the water's edge, and then sent them to collect boats and also fishing tackle.

Within an hour six boats containing the arms went down the river, and half an hour afterwards the town was sur-

rounded and searched through and through by Auxiliary Cadets who had concentrated on the place from three different points —their only bag being the unfortunate lorry drivers.

Some three miles below Ballybor there stand on the bank of the river the ruins of a fine old Franciscan Abbey, in the vaults of which the arms were safely hidden. Afterwards Larry and his men spent the morning fishing for sea-trout towards the estuary, returning to Ballybor in the afternoon, hungry and worn-out, to fall into the hands of the Auxiliaries, who commandeered their fish and then let them go home.

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After the murder of Patsey Mulligan the district of Ballybor was comparatively free from outrages for several months, and Blake, the D.I., began to think that his troubles were over; but very shortly after Larry had successfully run his cargo of American arms Blake was undeceived, and in a short time the district became one of the worst in the west.

Success made Larry bolder, and further success made him rash. Being miles from a road, the old abbey was a most inconvenient place to keep the arms, and he determined to bring them to the mill in Ballybor.

Bennett, the owner, had a house alongside the mill, and another house some miles out in the country, where he was in the habit of going from Saturday until Monday morning, when the mill house used to be locked up.

Larry arranged another fishing expedition on a Saturday afternoon, and when it was dark they transferred the arms from the abbey to the mill, hiding them under piles of sawdust in the cellars below the saw-benches. It was then decided to make an assault on the Ballybor police barracks the following night, and to wipe out the police for good and all.

But this time his luck was out. On Sunday afternoon Bennett suddenly made up his mind to return to Ballybor, and motored there in the afternoon with his eldest son. After tea his son took a walk over the mill, and to his surprise found a brand-new American repeating-rifle in the clerk's office: his father went at once to the police barracks to inform Blake of the discovery, who arranged to make a raid on the mill as soon as it was dark.

Blake had settled to take the arms, if found in the mill, straight off to the nearest military barracks, and to this end left the barracks with a strong force in two Crossleys. They went for some distance towards Grouse Lodge barracks, turned off at a cross-roads, and made their way back to Ballybor, arriving at the mill by the time it was dark.

Leaving the cars about a hundred yards from the mill, Blake walked on to the entrance with a sergeant and a constable, and as they drew near,

to their surprise they saw that the mill was lit up. Telling his men to wait, Blake advanced to the door, which led into the machinery buildings, and on peeping in saw that the place was full of masked men in a queue, being served out with rifles from the clerk's office.

Blake saw that he must act quickly, but that by the time he could bring up his men all the masked men would be armed, so he determined on a ruse. In a loud voice he shouted out, "God save us, here are the Black and Tans; run, boys, for your lives," and at the same time opened fire.

The magic words "Black and Tan" have the same effect on an Irish crowd as the name of Cromwell had during a previous period of Irish history, and a wild stampede ensued in the mill, the final touch being added by some one switching off the electric lights. As soon as Blake saw the effects of his words he dashed in to try and secure a prisoner, and managed to seize a man near the entrance, and hold him until his men, alarmed by the shots, arrived hurriedly on the scene.

By the aid of electric torches the police quickly collected the arms which the Volunteers had thrown away in their panic, and a constable having gone to fetch the cars, they were stowed in, and in a short time were on their long journey to the military barracks.

Larry stampeded with the rest of the men in the mill, but once outside he pulled himself together, and determined to make an effort to regain his beloved arms. Guessing that the police would be fully occupied removing the arms, he made his way back along the dark streets to the mill, and saw the cars drive off.

Part of the preparations for assaulting the barracks had been to block all roads along which help could come to the barracks; and, as Larry expected, after some time the cars returned to the barracks, being unable to proceed in any direction owing to deep trenches cut across the roads.

As soon as Larry had seen the cars return, he collected three of his best men, commandeered a car in the name of the I.R.A.—at this time in many parts of Ireland a harmless citizen stood an excellent chance of having his car taken by the military on a Monday, by the police on Tuesday, by the Auxiliaries on Wednesday, and by the I.R.A. for the rest of the week—and drove straight to the Cloonalla district, through which he knew that Blake would have to pass the next day on his way to the nearest military barracks. They took shovels with them, and soon had the trench across the road filled in, and made their way to the house of a local Volunteer.

That night Larry worked like a man possessed, and by daybreak had an ambuscade prepared for Blake at a point where the road, following the

shore of a large lake, runs under an overhanging rock, and then turns sharp to the west. Beyond the bend they cut the usual trench, and above on the rock erected loopholed walls of stone and sods, and here they waited, armed with every shot-gun, pistol, and home-made bomb which the district could produce.

That night Blake spent an anxious time in his small barrack-room, his ears straining for the sound of the first shot of the expected attack, and his brain striving to work out the problem of how to get the arms into safe keeping. After a time he tried to attend to some routine work, but soon gave it up as hopeless.

Leaning back in his chair he lit a cigarette. At that moment his eye was arrested by a large photograph of the notorious John O'Hara over the fireplace, and he began to think of how the man had tricked him by getting away by sea, while the police were hunting the countryside for him. From O'Hara's photograph his eye wandered to a brightly-printed card hanging on the wall, with a drawing of a steamer on the top.

For some time he read the letterpress of the card without having any idea of what it meant; then in a flash he realised that the problem was solved. At high tide the next morning the s.s. *Cockatoo* would sail from the port of Ballybor for Liverpool, and if O'Hara had tricked him by the sea, then he could trick Larry O'Halloran by the same means.

The following morning, a quarter of an hour before the *Cockatoo* was due to sail, two Crossleys dashed on to the quay, and before the usual crowd of quay loafers knew what was happening, they were outside the yard gate, and a strong guard of police with rifles at the ready had surrounded the gangway to the steamer. In a few minutes more the arms were all aboard the boat, stacked in an empty passenger saloon, guarded by police, and two minutes after Blake had given the captain his instructions, the *Cockatoo* was on her way down the river for England.

IV. THE RED CROSS.

An Englishman who has lived in Ireland for any length of time, knows that rivalry in religion and politics not only divides parts of Ireland, but even causes divisions in families. At one time recently things had reached such a state of passion that an Irish soldier or policeman who visited his home in the south or west was liable to find the door of his home shut in his face, and even to lose his life.

In a small town in the west of Ireland—in England you

would call the place a village —there lived some years ago a shopkeeper named John Dempsey, a steady hard-working man, who left politics alone and attended to his own business. In due course Dempsey married and had three children — two boys, Patrick and William, and a daughter, Sheila.

The children were educated at the national school, and as soon as their minds were capable of understanding anything, the wicked and stupid policy of hatred of and revenge on England was drummed into their ears week by week, month by month, and year by year, until the English appeared to their childish imaginations to be the greatest monsters of brutality in the world.

After the late war started, not before, the British newspapers and magazines impressed upon us the thoroughness of the German preparations for this war, and amongst other things, of how the present generation had had instilled into their minds from early childhood a hatred of the British by every schoolmaster and learned professor in Germany. For years past this German method has been carried on in Ireland, Irish national school teachers preparing the present generation of young men and women for the present Sinn Fein movement.

You have in England a saying that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, which applies very well to many national school teachers in the west and south of Ireland, who, though they can tell you of every wrong which England has inflicted on Ireland during the last three hundred years, yet know nothing of the greatness and power for good of the British Empire; nor do they realise the vast benefits which Ireland reaps as a partner of the Empire.

As time went on John Dempsey made and saved much money on porter, eggs, and other things, and as the boys appeared to be clever and anxious to get on in the world, he decided that they should complete their education in Dublin, Patrick eventually to become a doctor, and William to enter the priesthood; but as soon as the father announced his intentions, Sheila, who had never been separated from her brothers, implored that she might go with them and become a hospital nurse.

In the end the old man gave way and the three children went to Dublin, where Patrick duly qualified as a doctor, Sheila became a nurse in one of the hospitals there, but William did not become a priest.

When the brothers and sister first went to Dublin, Sinn Fein was rapidly becoming the great party of the Celts in Ireland, and every young man and woman was pressed hard to join. Patrick and Sheila joined eagerly, but William refused, and the idea of becoming a priest being now dis-

tasteful to him, he joined the R.I.C., to the bitter resentment of his brother and sister, who refused even to see him.

During the summer of 1919 the two brothers and sister met again at home, Sheila on her summer holidays, Patrick waiting for an appointment, and William, who was now stationed at the neighbouring town of Ballybor, on leave. At first the other two resented the presence of William, and there were bitter and passionate political arguments at every meal; but after a time their natural kindliness prevailed, and the three became nearly as great pals as formerly, but the shadow of William's uniform seemed always to come between them.

Sheila was the first to go back. A letter from her matron came one morning asking if she would care to go abroad, to take entire charge of a patient who had been ordered to live in Switzerland by the doctors. She did not wait to answer, but returned to Dublin that day, lest she should be too late.

Patrick and William were at this time typical of the two parties into which the people of the greater part of Ireland were divided—in plain language, Patrick was a rebel and William a loyalist! And though the loyalist party was very small in comparison to the other, yet it would never have been so small if proper support from the Government had been forthcoming at the right time, but would have grown larger and larger as the outrages increased, and the decent elements of the population ranged themselves on the side of law and order.

During his time in Dublin, Patrick, young and enthusiastic, had become deeply involved in the Sinn Fein movement, and when one day he found himself bound hand and foot to a policy of outrage and murder, he made strong efforts to regain his freedom, but was quickly made to realise that he now belonged, body and soul, to Sinn Fein.

No sooner had Sheila gone than the two brothers began to quarrel—to end in hot and bitter words at supper one night, when William left the table and returned at once to Ballybor. A few days afterwards Patrick received an order from Dublin to report at once to the Sinn Fein H.Q.'s there, and though he would have liked to refuse, he dared not.

On arrival in Dublin, Patrick duly reported at H.Q.'s, and there learnt that he had been chosen for a most unpleasant job. About this time, after their signal initial successes, the I.R.A. were endeavouring to organise a force which would entirely wipe out the police, or at any rate reduce them to complete impotence.

To this end the General Staff of the I.R.A. were determined to leave no stone unturned to achieve success in the ambuscades of patrols and attacks on barracks. During

the preliminary attacks the rebels had lost heavily through lack of medical care, and it was now determined that a doctor should attend all ambuscades and attacks.

Funds were plentiful, and in a few days Patrick found himself set up as a practising doctor in a large house in Dublin, and it was arranged that, when an attack was to take place in a certain district, he should receive a wire calling him to hold a consultation in a district close by. They supplied him with a good car, there were no restrictions on the movements of doctors, so that the busy young Dublin doctor, hurrying to the sick-bed of a country patient, excited no suspicion.

The plan was quite simple, and worked smoothly. An ambuscade would be arranged at H.Q.'s in Dublin to take place at a certain point where it was known that a police patrol passed. The day before Patrick would receive his wire, and early the next morning would leave Dublin for the scene of operations. When within a short distance of the attack he would stop his car, and remain there until the fight was over, attend to the wounded, and afterwards return to Dublin.

On two occasions he was surprised by relief parties of military, but each time he was able to explain his presence—that it was a mere chance that he happened to be passing, and that his professional instincts were at once aroused by the sight of the wounded men.

In the case of an attack on police barracks the procedure was somewhat different. Some days before Patrick would receive his usual wire—never from the place where the attack was to take place, but from a neighbouring town—and at the same time would receive instructions in Dublin of the time and place of the attack.

On arriving at the place of attack he would put up at the best hotel, giving out that he had come to attend a consultation in the town, from which the wire had been sent. After a talk with the local Volunteer captain, a house would be decided on as a temporary hospital, to which the wounded would be taken, and after the attack Patrick would simply disappear.

At first the danger and excitement appealed to his high-strung temperament, but soon the novelty wore off, and he saw that there could only be one end for him—exposure and professional ruin, if not a long term of imprisonment. In vain he asked to be allowed to resume his profession, but he might as well have begged for mercy from the Inquisition of old.

One evening, on his return from an ambuscade, Patrick found a wire from Sheila, saying that her patient had suddenly died in Switzerland, and that she was crossing to Dublin that night. The next morning

she arrived, radiant with health, and eager for news.

Under her patient's will Sheila received a legacy of about £2000 and a car, which was stored in a Dublin garage, and now she was free to devote herself to the cause of Ireland's freedom. On hearing of Patrick's occupation, she at once determined to join him.

Patrick was devoted to his sister, and tried hard to put the idea out of her head, but in the end had to give way. That very day she made him take her to H.Q.'s, where she offered the services of herself and car to the I.R.A.

Owing to an insufficient number of rifles for ambuscades and attacks on a large scale all over the country, the General Staff had decided to collect rifles in Dublin and send them down to the scenes of attacks in cars. Sheila's offer coincided with this decision, and to Patrick's horror he and Sheila received orders to attend attacks, and also to carry the rifles and ammunition.

The car was found to be a large touring car, to which a false bottom was fitted to take rifles, whilst further false bottoms under the seats gave sufficient room to hide revolvers, and a dummy space which was packed with S.A.A. Sheila had large red crosses painted on the lamps and windscreen, and the camouflage was complete.

For months the brother and sister—Patrick looking a typical young doctor, and Sheila dressed as a hospital nurse—carried arms and first aid to ambuscades throughout the south and west, and not the slightest suspicion appears to have been aroused in the minds of the authorities. Sheila thoroughly enjoyed the excitement, and soon became known as the Florence Nightingale of the I.R.A.

One day there came a wire from home that their mother was dangerously ill, and begging them to go to her at once. Patrick knew that if they asked leave to go, their taskmasters would refuse, and so decided to take "French leave."

William had also been sent for, and again the two brothers and sister met. After a few days their mother took a turn for the better, but Patrick, who dreaded returning to Dublin, insisted on staying, in spite of Sheila's urgings to get back to their work.

Soon after their mother was out of danger Sheila received an invitation to a dance at a large farm-house about two miles away, and drove there in the car, resplendent in a Paris evening dress. Patrick and William refused to go, the former making the excuse that he did not like to leave his mother, the latter because he knew that the presence of a policeman would break up the dance.

That evening, after it was dark, William walked across the fields to see an old school friend, one of the few men in the district who would speak

to him at all, and then only at night in his own house. When William left, this man warned him that Knockbrack Wood would not be a healthy place for the next few days, but when pressed for an explanation would say no more.

When William reached home he learnt from his father that during his absence a stranger had called for Patrick, and that soon afterwards the two had left hurriedly to fetch Sheila, Patrick saying that he would have to return to Dublin that night by car.

Old Dempsey seemed much upset, and after the warning received that night William's suspicions were aroused. As soon as supper was over he retired to bed, or rather to wait in his room until the house was quiet, when he meant to bicycle back to Ballybor.

William had not been in his room more than ten minutes when he heard Sheila's car drive up, and the front door open and shut. Then he heard Sheila come upstairs to her bedroom, followed by Patrick and strange footsteps, and then the closing of Patrick's door.

The bedrooms of the two brothers were separated by a thin partition, and William managed to overhear enough of their conversation to make out that there was to be an ambuscade in Knockbrack Wood on Wednesday night (this being Monday), and that Patrick was returning at once to Dublin.

William lay as still as a mouse, hoping that Patrick and Sheila would not realise that he was in the house, and in their hurry forget about him. He could tell from the tone of his brother's voice that he was not for it, but further conversation was cut short by Sheila calling out that she was ready to start.

Shortly afterwards William heard the three leaving the house and the car go off in the direction of Dublin. He waited for a few minutes to give the stranger time to get well away, then got out his bicycle, and with his revolver ready in his right hand, started off for Ballybor.

While William was riding for dear life to Ballybor, Sheila and Patrick were tearing across Ireland to fetch the arms for the ambuscade. They reached Dublin without any trouble, had a short rest and a meal, collected the arms from the secret hiding-place, and then started off on the return journey by a different route.

By previous arrangement they were met outside the town after dark by the local Volunteer captain and a party of men, who took over the arms from them, when they drove on home. Owing to the fact that they had left and returned at night, no one in the town had any idea that they had been away.

For some weeks past the police had been bringing tremendous pressure to bear on

the rebels throughout the south and west, which pressure corresponded with the appointment of a new Inspector-General of the R.I.C. So strong was the pressure growing that the rebel staff were afraid of a collapse, and when their secret service learnt that the I.G. would be motoring to Ballybor on this particular Wednesday night, they determined to ambush him in Knockbrack Wood, and to kill him at all costs.

Knockbrack Wood lies along both sides of a main road for a distance of about a mile and a half, and in the middle the road makes a sharp bend to avoid a huge granite rock which towers above the trees and makes this corner quite blind. On the far side of this bend from the direction of Ballybor the road rises suddenly, so that a car going towards that place would be likely to approach the bend at a good pace, and be unable to avoid an obstacle or trench just round the corner.

Here it was settled to make the attempt on the I.G.'s life, and on the Wednesday the local Volunteers, under the direction of staff officers from Dublin, started to make the preparations. By dark all was complete, except to cut a trench across the road, and a large party of Volunteers had taken up positions on each side of the road at the bend.

It was expected that the I.G.'s car would be wrecked, or at any rate brought to a standstill, just beneath the big rock, on the top of which there was a bombing post, with orders to drop a flare as soon as the car was below, to enable the riflemen to aim in the dark, and to follow up the flare with a shower of bombs.

Patrick and Sheila waited until it was nearly dark, when they motored to Knockbrack Wood, leaving the car up a narrow lane in the wood, about a hundred yards from the big rock on the Ballybor side. They then retired to a safe distance to await events.

After several hours of waiting they left the wood and walked up and down the road to Ballybor, as by this time they were half frozen with cold. Shortly afterwards they were joined by the Volunteer captain, and as it would soon be daylight, Patrick suggested to him that the men should be sent home.

The Volunteer captain was a stupid fellow, and further, he resented any suggestion as to what he should do from Patrick; and the three of them—Sheila, Patrick, and the captain—began a heated argument in the middle of the road: the captain argued that an order was an order, and that he would keep his men there until the next night if necessary, or even longer.

Patrick saw the mistake he had made, shrugged his shoulders, and started to return to the car with Sheila.

Now their whole attention

had been centred on the direction from which the I.G.'s car was expected to come, and the last thing they expected was a counter-attack from the direction of Ballybor; but as Patrick and Sheila turned to leave the Volunteer captain, they found themselves covered by a party of R.I.C., with Blake at their head, and at the same time heavy firing burst out in the wood on both sides of the road.

Patrick and Sheila had no alternative but to put up their hands, but the Volunteer captain tried to escape, and was promptly shot by a constable. Blake asked what they were doing at such an hour on the highroad, and Patrick was starting his usual story of how he and his sister were on their way from Dublin to attend an urgent case in the country, but when he caught sight of his brother William standing behind Blake, he faltered and remained dumb.

Before Blake could ask any more questions they had to jump to one side to avoid a Crossley full of Auxiliaries, which dashed past, and stopped a few yards beyond them, the Cadets at once jumping out and taking up positions on each side of the car with Lewis guns trained to sweep the road as far as the big rock. Blake, after ordering William and a constable to take Patrick and Sheila down the Ballybor road out of the line of fire until he could deal with them, took command of the Auxiliaries, and waited for the action to develop.

By this time it was daylight, and the police, who had worked round the flanks of the ambushers, began to make it pretty hot for the men in the trenches. Now it is one thing to shoot an unfortunate policeman perched up in a stationary lorry in the middle of the road, and quite a different story when the policeman starts to shoot you in the back from behind a tree, and very soon the Volunteers broke from their trenches and started to stream down the Ballybor road.

There was a momentary lull in the firing, broken by two hurricane bursts of fire from the Cadets' Lewis guns, and the Volunteers fell in little heaps on the grey limestone road; the remainder hesitated, and then ran for their trenches, to be met by a hail of bullets from the police, who had taken up positions commanding the trenches while the Volunteers were trying to escape by the road. Again they tried to escape along the road, and again the Lewis guns spat out a magazine of bullets whilst a man could count five, the noise of the guns being intensified by the dead wall of trees.

The few Volunteers now left threw down their arms, put up their hands, and the fight was over.

In the meantime William had taken his brother and sister down the Ballybor road until they came to the lane where the car was, and here

he told them to wait. After a few minutes Sheila asked him to send the constable out of hearing, as she wished to talk to him.

After the constable had retired up the lane there was a terrible silence for several minutes. Patrick and Sheila both realised too late that William must have been in the house when they started on their journey to Dublin for the arms, and that he must have gone straight to Ballybor to warn the police of the impending ambuscade. They knew that, even if they were not sentenced to death, they could not escape a long term of imprisonment, and that they had been betrayed by their own brother, but would not—or could not—realise that William had only done his duty.

Suddenly Sheila burst into a passionate denouncement of William's treachery to his country and his own flesh and blood, to be stopped by Patrick with great difficulty, who, controlling his rising passion and terror by a great effort, implored William for their mother's sake to let them escape while there was yet time. At any rate to let Sheila go—surely the British Government did not wage war on women.

Poor William was torn between love for his brother and sister and his duty to his King. In those short moments he went through the agony of hell, knowing well that if he refused to let them escape he would carry for the rest of his life the brand of Cain; on the other hand, if he let them go he would not only be betraying his King, but also he would ruin his own career, and probably Blake's as well.

To William's great credit be it said, his sense of duty prevailed, and he refused to let them go; and to his great relief the unhappy scene was cut short by the sudden appearance of Blake.

Shortly afterwards the constable returned, and reported to Blake that he had found a Red Cross car up the lane. Blake gave orders for the car to be brought on to the high-road, and after collecting his men, started for Ballybor with Patrick and Sheila prisoners in their own car.

HONOURS EASY.

BY C. E. MONTAGUE.

I.

WHEN Colin March, a younger son of the famous diplomatist, played in a British embassy garden abroad, his foreign nurse gave him a tortoise. "A useful beast," she explained: "it devours cockroaches; they are its passion."

Colin wanted to see this beneficent passion at work. So he captured one of the embassy's many cockroaches, and put it down in front of the tortoise's nose, like an early Christian presented to a lion. The tortoise eyed the offered feast, and mused deeply. The cockroach did not muse. It was a cockroach of action. Without any apparent need for reflection it bolted for cover, like a flash of blackness, right into the tortoise's shell, and hid itself in that profounder thinker's armpit.

The cadet of a dynasty of ambassadors was charmed with the cockroach's wit. He filed the whole affair in a pigeonhole of his 'cute little mind. As he grew up he would often chuckle to think of it. Piquant parallels would occur to him.

When Colin was twenty the war came. "*C'est beau, ça,*" he said, when he saw what was done on the spot by most of the young men that he knew. He was a connoisseur. He could tell a fine gesture. "It makes fools," he said, "of us scoffers. It is as if God had broken loose out of the churches. Little new peers like my dear cousin Grax are becoming patrician. The rich are fairly jumping through the needle's eye—flocks of 'em—sheep at a gap."

Colin was not to be carried off his own feet by any rush to take arms. He made no holy excuses about the omission: his sense of humour saved him from that. The only kind of humbug that it would allow him to practise was humbug conscious and gleeful—not Pecksniff's humbug; only Sganarelle's. It was a vital interest to him, he demurely said, not to be dead. And how could a ruling class rule from the tomb? Might not one honestly praise Father Damien without rushing off to nurse lepers? Besides, his elder brother was badly wounded already; life, he pointed out, might at any moment become vastly more worth living than ever.

And yet the war, and the way that his caste thought about it, were not to be easily talked out of his path. Like lions, they straddled across it; like tortoises, they impended

over our quick-witted cockroach. Perhaps he remembered. He seemed to. For one day he spoke to his father, his father spoke to the proper person, and Colin was given a temporary commission for "special employment" in France. From war he thus found refuge in the Army. The cockroach was safe in the tortoise's armpit.

There were many strange "special employments" in France. One special employee wrote tracts upon the duty of desertion, for airmen to drop on the enemy's lines. Another kept a country-house for visiting magnates to stay at. Another met dying officers' wives at the boat, and whisked them away in fleet cars to the death-beds. All these had something to do. And there were others, who may have done little harm. Colin was one of them. "G.H.Q., 5th Echelon," was his army address. By day he sat in a tin hut, properly warmed. His casement opened on the Channel's foam. A sergeant-major brought him forms to sign, and said, "The place, sir, for the name is 'ere." He had a telephone soon—a great help in crying off dinner engagements whenever a more amusing one came. He made the right faces when any one called. He was always game for a round of golf with the Brigadier at Le Touquet. For these duties his qualifications were excellent French and Italian. He may not have borne any physical part in the great westward retreat. But how could he? What good would it do to wade into the sea?

II.

For three months Colin led a life of rude health, brightened by spirited tiffs with other saviours of the country. Ruder disputes going on elsewhere formed a dim, distinguished background for these engaging figures: battles and sieges, the Marne and the Aisne, the fall of Antwerp, the First Battle of Ypres. Colin was highly aware of the value of all this forest distance of tapestried gloom against which his own foreground figure was planted. He knew what was what. All this was romance, like the whining of winds that have blown over deserts of snow when they sniff at night round the house where a person, who knows what is what, lies in bed, with the firelight leaping or musing.

Then came the Deluge. Or, rather, one of the Deluges. Colin would say: "Poor old G.H.Q. was made to be inundated and reinundated, like Holland, on proper occasions. Or it's like England, with Picts and Brythons and Angles and Normans all rushing it in their turns. All of us here are ex-conquerors, layer on layer of us. First to charge in were

the War Office braves, the old hands, the mighty hunters of good jobs before the Lord. I came as a sutler with them. I'm the *jeune premier arriviste.* Then, after three months of the war, the notes of a distant recessional march strike our ears, a thunderous tramping is heard in the east, and there burst in upon us the pick of the old Regulars from the front —oh, not all of them, only those who had found that it was not the right sort of war, and that they had the right sort of friends. Approaching, they took a short run, and fairly butted and rammed their way into shelter, with all their mothers and uncles pushing them hard from behind—fell right in on top of us here with their cavalry spurs and their Guards knickerbockers and buttons and swashing and martial outsides. They were like the saints taking the Kingdom of Heaven by storm. We tried to be nice to them; sat as close as we could to make room; cut our work in two and gave them half, like St Martin's; talked to them kindly and wittily. They only stared. Then I knew them—the poor old Army Class worthies at school. Look at Claude, *par exemple*—his eyes! 'There is no speculation in those eyes.' "

Claude Barbason's brain, it may be, was not all air and fire. And Colin was yoked to him now. They bit wooden penholders in the same hut, and perfected a dislike of each other that they had roughed out in peace time in London. "Ever see," Colin would pleasantly ask you, "such a good German as Claude? *Tout ce qu'il y a de Boche, absolument!*" Claude's face, indeed, with its pink-and-white gravity, heavy blue eyes and straw hair, did call up visions of German officer prisoners. No doubt he had, through his ancestors, sojourned in England a good thirteen hundred years. Still, you could fancy him, that long ago, full of home thoughts of West Saxony, marching Londonward from the sea, mopping the sweat from pink cheeks and shaking the yellow hair away from china-blue eyes, to see for the first time, from the Kentish chalk downs, the Thames shining below through the trees.

Claude could take his own part without positive sparkle in this commerce in compliments. Colin to him was "the mountebank," with his "bounding cleverness" and his "beastly quotations." Colin, he said, dirtied everything that he touched; he seemed to like rolling himself and every one else in the mud; he called the scarlet Staff tabs—which they were both seeking—the Red Badge of Funk; he said the Job Lot Mess, where they and the other odds-and-ends ate, ought to hang out a sign on a board, "*Au Ravitaillement des Embusqués*"; he called Fifth Echelon "Chelsea" and "Greenwich" because, as he idiotically said, it gave a secure

and honoured old age to so many young men; he was always dragging in rotten gobbets of verse, with foul undermeanings: "Soldier, rest, thy warfare o'er"; "Keep thou still when clans are arming"; "His tin hat now shall be a hive for bees,"—oh, there was no end to his loathsomeness.

"Speak for yourself," Claude often wanted to say. Let the fellow befoul his own nest, and not decent people's. What could an amateur soldier like that know about what a real soldier must feel? Yet Claude's scorching retorts did not get themselves uttered, only something dry and austere, like, "I suppose we all get our orders and have to obey them," or, "Well, if you don't mind, I'll get on with my work. There's a war on," said with a reproving stiffness. Then Claude would bite his penholder pretty severely.

III.

I fancy it was in the gloom following one of these indecisive engagements with Colin that Claude's eyes were suddenly opened, like Adam's and Eve's, and he saw that, for the high purpose of conflict with Colin, he (Claude) was little better than naked. If, now, he had a ribbon or two on his bosom, all the darts of Colin's flashy trashy wit would be deflected; Claude would be armour-plated, like capital ships; like generals, he would be able to score without saying a word, just by sitting behind the front of his tunic and letting it tell.

Somebody said in his hearing that night that the King of Alania—we'll call it Alania—was soon to visit our front. Claude listened. After dinner he cast a long passionate look at a framed thing that hung on the ante-room wall. It looked from afar like a coloured plate of the full solar spectrum, but it was labelled, "The Ribbons of all the World's Orders of Honour." Yes, an Alanian ribbon was there—a blue one, a beauty. Fie, thought Claude, upon this quiet life in a hut, yoked with an unbeliever. Swiftly he wrote to three uncles of his—wrote as he had not written since the days when he first perceived that the trenches were no place for him.

The uncles were loyal; Claude, if a babe in some ways, was no Babe in the Wood. And they were soldiers, and well placed for doing good deeds to a nephew. One of the three was in actual charge of the plans for giving this Alanian King a good time, *vice* somebody else who was ill.

The King duly came. He was reverentially motored about from meal to meal, well in the rear of our front. And who but Claude sat in state beside the chauffeur, except when he

—Claude, not the chauffeur—leapt down to open the door! In this great office Claude bore himself meekly through three dusty midsummer days. On the third evening the King and his British guides, nurses, and gillies of every degree stood somewhat self-consciously grouped at Amiens on one of that city's desolate lengths of low railway platform. The guest was going away. Abruptly the fountain of honour was turned full on, and it played in the twilight.

Nervous and kind, wishful to do the right thing by Britain, but not to keep one of France's trains waiting, the King dealt out Stars of Alania with shy expedition to all the British officers who had done anything for him. An A.D.C. stood beside him and fed the blue-ribboned trinkets into the gracious hand. Claude went in last. But, even when he was bestarred, three stars were visibly left over. The King held one of them, ready to shed. The A.D.C. was still holding an unmistakable brace. Somebody must have miscounted. Or else, as Claude came to believe later, the devil was in it. The fountain of honour looked like slopping over the edge of its basin.

A little way off, in the gathering dusk, three British officers, not attached to the King's party, were standing, perhaps awaiting the train, perhaps not. The Alanian A.D.C. cast a look towards them. Then he looked at the King and drew the King's eyes towards the trio. The King nodded. "There iss," he said sweetly, "no British officer who iss not worthy." The red-eyed train for Paris was now clanking out of the tunnel into the station. "Quick, please!" said the King, in Alanian.

The unpremeditated vessels of the royal grace were informed. And the angel of this annunciation was Claude. To his unaffected distaste he found, on approach, that one of the three was Colin. Still, Claude's not to reason why, at any rate until later. He delivered royalty's summons. In three minutes the three remainder Stars had settled into their new, fortuitous homes, the King had peace in the quickening train, and Claude had briefly let himself go, on the question of unearned increment, and was hearing a little from Colin about the divine super-equity of the ruling that he who had borne the burden and heat of three full days' work in the vineyard should not receive more than he who had wrought for one hour only.

"An hour!" objected the literal Claude. "Why, you only paraded for pay!"

"Absolutely," said Colin. But he was too modest. That dramatic scene at the station had really taken some skill and pains to bring off. Drama, they say, is the art of preparation.

Claude simmered and fumed. "Anyhow," Colin said like an

angel, "it has all ended happily."

"Not that I wanted," Colin explained to me later, "this acrid Alanian blue blob. Red is the only wear, to my mind, on this obscene khaki. Still one has to take life as it comes. So I went to the station. I even took other trouble. Why should I have to, though? Why should Claude have to eat dust all over the Pas de Calais before he can stick what he likes on his coat? Let's have Free Trade in all ribbons. Then they'd give real distinction. A man would write himself down just what he is, by the things he'd put on. All the born base-wallahs would put up three rows on the spot, if they've not got them now. The Samurai at the front would take care to wear nothing—they'd be like the patriciate we're getting in England at last, the fellows who won't take the peerages. I should wear dozens, but I'd be an artist about it. I'd paint like a Rubens and wear my own picture. I'd start from that deep Russian red with the bottomless lustre—the Cross of St George, or what is it?—and fight it out in that key all the summer. Oh, I see red; I can hear it—whole chords of red, peals of it. Isn't any Grand Duke ever coming this way?"

IV.

None came. But some bird of the air must soon have carried to Colin the news that a mission of British officers, heroes of Mons and the Marne, was about to visit the Russian front. For Colin wrote, swiftly and well, to the proper person in London. He had heard that for this mission ten hard-bitten fighters were needed; they had to have manners, know French, and be able to carry their wine. Colin answered the call of his country the moment he got it to come to him. It was, he saw, no case for delay. Empires perish. Before such another call came the Russians might have a Republic, and no decorations about, like the poor Yanks, and then—too late, the saddest words in life, too late. Plenty of time later on, for Colin to prosecute his conquests in France. He took his stand now with the nine other courteous and capacious linguists.

In holy Russia the primitive virtue of hospitality was so ardently practised that Colin came back crying out for a separate peace. No mere London season, he vowed, had ever made such demands upon the digestive force of the celebrants as this Muscovite joy-ride. Still, that profoundly lustrous red ribbon was his.

He brought back, besides, a lot of good stories. One was about a Japanese colonel, an-

other guest of the Tsar's. In a Russian trench this child of the sunrise had strayed from the side of his guides and fallen in with four Russian privates. They were good lads from the country, simple but careful. They were not sure whether the war was still the old one with Japan or another. Anyhow, they considered it safer to kill a loose Jap. The faithful souls did it, and Colin declared that the consequent Russian apologies to Japan were a classic for young attachés to study, apart from their primary worth as light fiction. Richer still in comedy was the Japanese Government's plight. For, by way of good manners, it had to pretend to believe that the murder was not got up by the Tsar. And, to keep up this pose, a Russian Staff Captain, the guide who had not succeeded in keeping the Japanese Colonel alive, had to be given a Japanese Order. "The gaud," said Colin to the Job Lot Mess, "was a treasure, a sovereign prince of enamels. We ought to make more of the Japs. We ought to shift the whole war farther East. We might hold all the gorgeous East in fee. Churchill is right."

V.

Claude did not hear this address upon strategy. Claude too had gone East, though less far. When left alone in the hut he had thought deeply about A.D.C.'s. Peace, perfect peace, was their lot in this war. They toiled not, neither did they fight: yet honour found them; beauty fell, as it were, from the air, and was caught upon their tunics. Claude, as the New World says, figured upon it. Then he acted. Nature may not have made him expressly for action: rather, perhaps, for the contemplation of himself in some becoming light. But Colin's own devout self was not surer than Claude of the efficacy of prayer, directed to the right quarter. Had not he, too, seen the Red Sea cut in two, for his safety, and passed across dry? And now the right quarter was clear. It was that bachelor uncle of Claude's who had lately got the command of a Corps. "Claude is descended," Colin explained, "from a long line of bachelor uncles. All Barbasons are. That's why they're so rich."

On the second day of the Battle of Loos, Claude rallied round this beneficent uncle. The new A.D.C. took the place of a wild young peer who had gone mad, and swindled and lied his way back to the head of an equally wild Irish platoon, then diminishing in the lost battle. The uncle told Claude about this eccentric: "Damn little fool! I'd just been thinking of putting him up for an

M.C. I hope *you'll* know when you're well off." Claude did. Like Issachar, he "saw that rest was good." And the Corps headquarters were pleasant. There would he see no enemy but winter and rough weather; and these are not lethal in well-built châteaux.

He was not as many A.D.C.'s are. Some of the most contumacious of men are those who do little personal things for the great. Valets to Emperors, ushers to Solons, batmen to heroes—too often nothing is great to such men, and nobody either. Nearly all the most mutinous blasphemy that was talked during the war was talked in the A.D.C. rooms of the mighty. But Claude revered his chief. To him his uncle was one in whom the soul of "the real army" lived on, pestered indeed but still nobly unswamped by the ragtag and bobtail of Kitcheners and Territorials. Claude could feel for the Corps Commander. Had not he too, for long months, endured the manners of Colin, the New Army man, in the wilderness?

Claude had not served him a month when the uncle sent up his name for a Military Cross. "You'll get it, too," he told him. "Whenever these lists of recommendations look a bit long to the people upstairs, they start lopping off names from the tail-end, and work up. So I've wedged yours in near the middle, well up."

Claude knocked off work for the day, he was so moved. All things were well. Through the tall window, across the bejewelled dewy grass of the park, he could see a white road and troops on it; a New Army battalion—he could tell that; they had no smartness—marching up to the front, to go into the line, the undersized men bending under their packs, to ease the cut of the straps on the shoulder, and chorusing one of their contumacious songs of mock-funk—

> "Oh my! I don't want to die;
> I want to go 'ome."

Then the road was vacant and white for a time, till a wailing of bagpipes arose, and a kilted battalion, dwarfed to the size of a company, hove into sight, marching the opposite way: four little companies like platoons, and few officers anywhere; the pipes skirling some fearful lament, almost animal, like a moaning or keening of primitive women over their dead; the men with a stiff savage gait of sombre defiance—scorn of the enemy they had smashed, of the Staff that had thrown Scottish valour away, of the non-Scottish troops that had failed on a flank, of the non-Scottish Commander-in-Chief that had loosed the fool battle.

Claude was no great hand at reading that sort of print. Still, he did make out something. War was the great game: he saw that more clearly than ever; he saw,

too, how great beyond all other wars was this war, how much more important a business to shine in. And, Gosh! what a facer this M.C. would be for the Mountebank!

VI.

It was "at the front," of all places, that this blow fell upon Colin: not quite at the place where the smell of rotting meat hung, all that autumn, but still pretty near it, at a brigade headquarters. It counted all right for his purpose.

After his travels in Russia, Colin had felt it was time he became a full G.S.O., a Staff Officer proper. Base was the slave who remained for ever merely "attached to" the Staff. But so many Colins had felt this before, and had carried their point so completely, that scandal was feared. To avert it, a ruling had gone forth that all G.S.O.'s appointed thenceforth must have had some trench service. Poor Colin, to compass his end, had to take kit for a whole fortnight's stay in a new Brigade commander's charmless dug-out, and to listen in candle-lit frowst to the banalities talked by the Brigadier, Brigade Major, Staff Captain, and some odds-and-ends of Medicine, Signals, and the Church. Each of these, he found, had some two things to say about life, and three jokes, so that the conversation of each was a sort of recurring decimal of five places. Each of them watched, with bitter or patient foreknowledge, the countless revolutions of the others' antique decimals. One day, however, Colin heard a new thing.

A Major, an acting battalion commander, had come in to tea. He knew the Brigadier well, and, like a good soldier, he was blaspheming the great for the sweat that they will often give you for nothing. "Hardly a fortnight ago, sir," he said to his host, "just before you came to us, a Corps order came round, to say some foreign devils—the Japs, I believe—had sent a wad of their 'Crosses for Valour'—sort of V.C.'s—one for the absolute ace—any rank—in each British Corps. Every C.O. was to pick out the hottest man-eater he'd got, for the Corps to select the tip-topper. I took days at the job, worried my officers, ricked my own brain with being judgmatic. I sent in a beauty at last—a Sergeant. He'd got cut off in a post with five men and had held up the Boches for two days, till we got him away. He'd had a broken arm all the time—a great fellow! All the other C.O.'s in the Corps ran their prize tigers too, for all they were worth. No good. It was all waste of time. The Cross never got past the Corps. An A.D.C. got it, a

fellow just up from the base—Barton, Brabazon, Brasner—some name like that."

"The ribbon was—what colour, sir?" Colin asked.

"Mouldy bluish, I heard," said the Major; "like Stilton."

"I think the name," Colin said, "must be Barbason."

"That's right," said the Major, suddenly interested in Colin. "You know him?"

"I thought every one did," said Colin, the man from the centre of things, almost severely. Ignorance seems, at times, as if it must almost be affectation.

"We're pretty provincial out in these parts," said the Brigadier softly. Colin laughed, and looked at the Brigadier with new respect. Colin could take with good humour any rebuke that had wit.

"What has this beggar done?" the Major vindictively asked him.

"He doesn't exactly do things," said Colin. "He wears them. Like me. Only he goes in for blue. He has just got an M.C. That's three different blues on his coat—a whole Blue Ribbon Army. No, an arrangement in blue, like a Whistler, but more chaste and natty—a glove-fit of the blues. He's Little Boy Blue, and he blows his own horn." Where other people get cross, Colin becomes a few degrees more copiously vivacious.

The two seniors looked at each other. The dull plum ribbon of the Victoria Cross was the only one on the Brigadier's tunic. The Major had fought well in three battles, and he had not even one. The Brigadier pointed to where a bar of ruddy Oriental radiance, that no Western loom could have made, glowed on Colin's breast, next to the lustrous Russian crimson. "That's pretty," the Brigadier said.

"It should be," said Colin. "It's old, and Chinese. I won it. By running away."

"Now, now——" The Brigadier, as a Colonel, had often had to curb the plunging modesty of subalterns.

"No idle boast, sir," said Colin. "Some Chinese Moltke came to G.H.Q. I was told to 'take the old euchre-player away out of this—anywhere—up to the front and get him shot over.' So we set off in a car for the front. The Far East didn't like the idea. Nor did the West. But pride ruled our will. We got down four miles from the front and walked on, up a road that felt naked and cocked up, right into the air. Then the trouble came. There was some sort of *émeute* going on in the air. A flock of white puff-balls was straying about the blue sky, always advancing by having a new puff break out, on ahead of it. Then something venomous fell into the road, six feet away, and hissed in a puddle—a thing like a bolt, or a nut, from the blue."

The Brigadier put in a note: "A chip from one of our own Archie shells."

"No doubt, sir," said Colin.

"I did not examine. I fell back. So did my lovely charge. Let nobody say a Chinese cannot run. The man who could beat me that day, to the car, would have been an Achilles. As we sped home my companion gave thanks, and made promises, first to God, then to me, for my lead. He was a faithful fellow! *Ecce signum!*" Colin touched the beautiful new ribbon on his bosom.

An orderly came in for his kit. His trench service was over. When he had gone, the two elder officers stared at each other. Simple souls abounded on our front and near it. Else, how could we have won?

VII.

Honours, as old-fashioned whist-players say, were now easy. Three all. But March had the pull in one way. For he was first to be back at the base, the honoriferous seaboard, washed by such tides as a man may take at the flood and be led on to fortune. "Always stick to the base, in a war," a fatherly Regular on the Q. side once advised him: "don't be led away by love of excitement. Most of the good things go to the base at the end of a war, and most of the big chances come to it now." But Colin needed no man's help to see a church by daylight.

Colin's prestige at the seats of the mighty was rising. The Chinese hero had lauded, in august ears, Colin's daring and skill as a guide to the front. But the next call on his gifts was to be for a virtue more distinctively Christian. Appendicitis had suddenly smitten another illustrious guest of our army, a Spanish-American Marshal, a neutral, and therefore more to be cherished than any ally. While he lay sick unto death in an inn at Bruay, the British officer who had led him about in the time of his health, and who hated the sight of natural deaths, was telephoning all day to beg that some bedside mannerist might be sent up to carry on smoothing the pillow, *vice* himself. "The Dago only wants," he said, "a sort of Angel in the House."

Colin was offered this errand of mercy. He pondered. A long time ago he had tried for some days to learn Spanish; he might find he could talk it a little now, if he tried. And that Russian story showed how, from the pure and unpolluted flesh of deceased foreign officers, violet and other beautiful colours may spring. Possibly red. Red, he hoped. He looked carefully into the same coloured plate on the ante-room wall at which Claude had once tenderly gazed. Yes, both the Aureate Harvest (with Swords) and the Bleeding Heart (with Swords, too) had red ribbons. The sick must be visited. Colin accepted.

He was back at the sea in eight days, better thought of than ever. His choice of official wreaths to put on the coffin, his turning of phrases on those little cards that are tied to the wreaths, were felt to have aided the cause. Spanish America, too, must have felt he had done the thing well. For in due time the Aureate Harvest came in as the other kindly fruits of the earth do for the use of her Colins.

"A somewhat ghoulish business," said Claude, when this just award was gazetted. Claude, at the time, was just back from the Corps. The uncle's drafts upon Britain's man power had grown so exacting that he was transferred to a more august job, where any diminutions he made in the population of these islands would be less violently observable. Colin said he was changed from a fatal accident into an obscure mortal disease. Anyhow, he had no use for Claude any longer; nor had Claude for him. Restored to the coast, Claude was working out a new way of fighting the Germans, a quite new engine of war. It was to have a great vogue, this new weapon. It could be used almost anywhere, except in a regiment. It was called "the re-organisation of the establishment" of the department or unit of which the re-organising person had charge.

Claude, now a Captain, was senior officer at the Sink, as his and Colin's little department was called by its irreverent neighbours. At first the Sink had been Colin; then Colin and Claude: six officers, doers of miscellaneous odd jobs, now reposed within it; there were a score of attendant orderlies, clerks, and chauffeurs. Why not cut it in two and house the two portions apart, with Claude to co-ordinate the exertions of both, as a G.S.O. 2 and a Major? Claude fell to work on a draft, fortified with a kind of genealogical tree to establish the lawful descent of disciplinary power over each of his expected twins, all the way down from the Commander-in-Chief. While he was writing the draft and drawing the tree he sometimes felt more apt to the sword than to the pen. But he stuck to the pen gamely.

VIII.

Something, I think, must have made Colin suspect. Perhaps he saw Claude writing with an abnormal fluency. Or of course he may just have had a pricking in his thumbs. Anyhow, like the intelligent dog whom God has taught to scent in good time his master's intention to drown him, Colin took himself off before Claude's draft was approved by the proper person. My next letter from Colin was from

a ducal, delectable house in Mayfair:—

"You see, they have combed me out of the trenches. Is it that I am seconded, or what is the term used by you militarists? *Tout court*, England hath need of me here. I work in this weather-proof house, the new Ministry of Liaison. No, I am not the Minister—only his eyes and ears, or a portion of these, and of his understanding. A *raison d'être* for the Ministry is being prepared. Meanwhile it offers asylum to young men of quality fleeing from Military Tribunals. Rods of the houses of signatories to Magna Charta rush in daily and cling to the horns of the altar. It is as a dock-leaf planted by merciful Nature where the nettles grow."

It seems that some gifted Scottish statesman, out of a job at the time, had been going up and down with a dirk, as it were, in his stocking, till all the statesmen in office wanted to find him something nice to play with, lest he should stick the knife into one of their wames. To save life in this way the Ministry of Liaison was founded, and this man of mettle was placed at its head. The Ministry was "to co-ordinate the functions of various administrative departments." Colin wrote to me later:—

"My reverence for this foundation grows. In this kicked ant-heap of a Europe it must be about the last abode of peace on earth and of good-will towards men, all men.

"Nae German lays his scaith to us,
We ne'er did ony harm.

"To us the harried Anglo-German flies, and we make him a confidential clerk or an interpreter. Here he spends happy days of Government time in writing letters to London newspapers, mostly to 'show up the Hun in our midst.' Like mediæval monasteries, we cherish through a dark and bloody age the endangered graces of life. Here, in the best types of chair, sleep the brave; here knit or crochet the fair, or, within seemly limits, carry on with the brave.

"Liaison our name,
And I will not deny,
In respect to the same,
What that name might imply.

"A free gallant life. To take me to the club, to lunch, my country has a car like Tennyson's full tide that 'moving, seems asleep.' Not a speck in the sky, except passing thoughts of what Claude may be up to. Are we not members of one another, and, if aught befall him, shall I not feel?"

Under that peaceful surface considerable forces were stirring. The skill of collectors had almost outgrown the supply of colligible matter. The most skilful were wearing about every ribbon there was; they had gained the whole world, and unless the world

were enlarged they might as well bid an early farewell to the neighing steed and the shrill trump and go home. To keep their ardour from going the way of the former warmth of the moon, as well as for other good reasons, the O.B.E. was invented.

The new species of laurel was sent, very justly, in bulk to the Ministry of Liaison to show how well the sender had done in creating a Ministry so worthy of reward. But Colin, through some unfortunate slip, was not on the list of those whom the King, on first thoughts, delighted to honour. He wrote to me :—

"They must have put me down third reserve only. The stones that these builders reject! Still, I was jammed in, head of a corner, later. Three high-stomached civilians, who work with us here, rejected the bauble, with a slight wave of the hand. I commend, I can even envy them. A civilian is free; he may guard his own honour. But to us soldiers, you know, an order's an order. Mine not to make reply. In I went, third wicket down. With canine loyalty I wagged an unoffended tail, and accepted my one-third of the crumbs that had fallen from the table of the proud."

You see, Colin, to my mind, had no real humbug about him, as I understand humbug. He had not the lie in his soul. He did not tell lies to himself, nor really very many to any one else. Humbug was Claude's special subject, not his. Colin's special subject was reds, and for that plummy red of the O.B.E. ribbon there was a place ready in his heart, or about a couple of inches above it.

The danger of being saddled with some undesirable job, as a vicegerent of Claude's, had now had time to blow over, and Colin began to hear the great wars and the tented or hutted field call him again. One month of tactful importunacy in the right place and he was gone, now in the full rosy red of a G.S.O., with the red and blue brassard of G. H. Q. too—with every guarantee, in fact, of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. To begin with, he travelled from London in the uncrowded Staff train, after his luncheon, instead of rising at six in the morning to catch the common crammed leave-train, like the ruck of regimental officers. These, on their way back to be killed, were carried off early to cool their heels for half a day at Folkestone till the Staff train should arrive at the pier and its occupants have time to dig themselves in on all the best sites on the boat. "A kindly precaution," said Colin that night, in the new mess at Bligny, to which he found himself carried away by the car that awaited him on the quay at Boulogne: "one of the many kindly precautions we take to set the moribund free from too much love of living."

Colin found Claude com-

manding at Bligny. Such a find might not seem elating. But it inspired Colin at dinner that night with a fine mischievous brightness. Taking a quick look at Claude now and then, to see how the stimulant worked, Colin rattled on about that slouching file of *condamnés*, the infantry and artillery subalterns coming back from their leave, trailing up the steep gangway at Folkestone on to the deck, with all their lumpish kit on their backs, and their eternal pipes and mud-sick uniforms, and looking awkwardly round them, shy among all the seated Staff people, for some solid object to sit on.

Claude rose to the fly; his face lit up a little when Colin played on his sense of "the New Army bounder's" social deficiencies. Yes, he had noticed those fellows—any one would—when he last went on leave. "Appalling crowd of navvies!" He felt himself, for the moment, in quite warm agreement with Colin—with what he took to be Colin.

Colin described to me later this tender reunion. "You should have heard him!" said Colin. "Claude is simply so much natural, born prey for irony. He is like one of the little guinea-pigs that they give to the snakes at the Zoo. A plain shirker like me is almost decent beside him. We're the two thieves, but Claude is the one that sniggered. 'Bill Sikeses in Sam Brownes'—that's what the little rodent calls the fellows that he and I have deserted. 'Really rather awful,' he says,—'these new officers. Quite five-sixths of them the sort of people you'd expect to touch their caps to you in civil life.' Imagine the lice on one of our Tommies finding fault with the Tommy's pedigree."

I had never seen Colin angry before. Any common vexation only made him more gaily ironical.

IX.

So far the two beauties had had to work, if only an hour, for all they had got. The next thing to come in was, as Colin vulgarly said, a bit of a war bonus.

For months our gallant London Press had felt a painful dearth of "hero stunts" and "sob stories." Lord Jellicoe had meanly preferred the continued existence of his fleet to the proper provision of good matter for "scare heads." Heroic editors began to shake their heads over Sir Douglas Haig's want of "snap," "go," and "punch" in maintaining the daily ration of thrills for bald men in arm-chairs at home. Pending the proper measures for "gingering up" these commanders, there might be some market still for a little emotionalising about the old stunt of "the heroes of Mons." Just to fill up the gap, why not a "whirlwind campaign" for giv-

ing a special medal or star to the few living men who had stemmed the German rush upon Paris in 1914?

It was rather a daring piece of stop-gappery. Still, it was a cheap "stunt." It needed no telegraphing: it could be "done in the office." And there was no risk of actions for libel and of "exemplary" damages, as in "stunts" of detraction against great Generals and Admirals and Ministers and leaders of industry who failed in their several ways to act up to the needs of "stunt" presses. So the "stunt" press took courage, and ranted and gushed, boomed and bleated and shrilled. And, the War Office having no courage to take, the Mons Star was invented when nearly all the men who might have deserved it were dead. Thus do the Colins and Claudes of this world build better than they know. They fight with their backs to the walls of good bedrooms, against every foe that would take a job from them, and at the close of the long day, or earlier, some unsought meed is added unto them, besides all that they seek.

Alike in gaining this guerdon, our two pretty men were not alike in the emotions raised by its possession. Colin crowed with frank joy at the scandal. Scandals, he said, were too few in these colourless times. Scandal was only a reverberation of adventure, the fuming of timid mobs when taller spirits hustled and pushed their way through. Wherever a high plume had stirred in the world, and big throws had been made and the costly unreason of romance had been properly prized, scandal had smoked up to heaven like dust from winning chariot-wheels. This wisdom of life he imparted to Claude, adjuring him also not to misuse the new ribbon. Blue at one end and red at the other, and all shaded, watered, transitional, and connective—why, it was clearly sent by Heaven for purposes of liaison, to hitch on the garden of gentians, forget-me-nots, heliotrope, and cornflower that had first bloomed on Claude's tunic to any later sallies he might meditate in red, green, even black. Only let Claude beware of minding the foolish orders issued by poker-fed Generals, men blind to the arts, as to the order in which ribbons should be arranged on the martial bosom. Imagine Velasquez or Tintoret laying his colours on in obedience to General Routine Orders. "No, blue to blue, red to red, each after its kind arrange we them."

Claude hated all such talk. Raffish gammon, only fit for a Radical hair-dresser! If the King thought it good enough to honour a man, what loyal soldier would jeer or belittle? Claude had the old army's fine sense of relative values well lodged in his soul. Gazetted awards were no mere measures of worth; they were worth itself, crystallised, capitalised. "Perhaps it isn't easy," he said to Colin, with solemn concessiveness, "for other people

to understand what these things mean to a soldier."

Somehow Colin did not seem so confounded by this as he ought to be. Instead, he only looked at Claude as if Claude were a curious exhibit in a museum, and this wounded afresh Claude's soldierly consciousness of his own irreproachable normality. Claude felt at these times an intense and burning wish that Colin were not the son of a peer. If Colin were scrubby by birth, somehow the world would seem more coherent.

But all this was an interlude. Back now to the grim realities of war.

X.

War hath her triumphs of company-floating, no less deserving renown than peace's. Claude had drafted and drawn to some purpose. With help from on high the Sink had become thrice itself, not merely twice, and one of these three new Sinks alone was more capacious than the great original. Unhappily, Claude had not secured command of the whole trinity. Some more majestic bird of prey, a G.H.Q. Colonel, had dropped like a stone out of the upper sky, somewhere close to the sun, and stuck his claws firmly into Claude's kill. But, subject always to this depredator, Claude received the fattest of the three distinct commands which owed him their being.

At Bligny he could not quite say what most of his six officers did. He felt surer about the chauffeurs. One of the officers he suspected of plans for salvaging solder from old bully-beef tins—a low job. He fancied another to be the minute early embryo of a demobilisation unit. A third was in unmistakable travail, writing a novel. A fourth seemed to have something to do with some of the Army's visitors from abroad. A fifth moved obscurely about in a dim borderland between letters and war; rumour said that he "smuggled the dope" into papers at Amsterdam and Madrid — "A Wolff in sheep's clothing, you know," Colin told me. The sixth was said to be sure that if only the war went on long enough we should end it decisively at last by feeding all the outer world's "movies" with the right stuff, and to this happy issue it was hoped that he was making some larger contribution than any one saw. Anyhow, they all kept moving. Cars were there for all, and petrol failed not. How was Claude to check the things they did, or left undone? He walked, unpolluted by such inquisitive cares, among the mysteries of his command.

The place itself had amenity. It was a white, classical, pre-Revolution chateau in a hollow between two chalk downs and beside a trout-stream. G.H.Q., with its possibly critical eyes,

was safely far off. No one at G.H.Q. cared about Bligny. It was a mere trousers button, a thing to be put out of mind until it should, hang it, come off. Claude "ran his own show"; and as it and everything in it were things without precedent, there was no binding routine: he might fashion the show after his own image. And, in the course of nature, some honour accrued to every head of a show in the course of a year, and where would Colin be then?

Colin, also, asked himself that. No specific job had been given him yet. He had only been dumped on Bligny because there was no valid reason for dumping him anywhere else. There he lay down to sleep of a night and rose up of a morning to ring for a car and roll off to visit some proper person and bring to his mind the parable of the Importunate Woman. This time he had quite a long run in the rôle of that excellent female. And, like her, he got there at last. He prayed himself into a job—not, he felt, one that was quite what it should be; still, it was not at Bligny; it was at G.H.Q. proper, near the heart of the rose. And so Colin rolled off for good, as it seemed.

He left Claude sitting rather moodily in his "office"—the absent Comtesse de Bligny's boudoir. Claude always sat there for several hours a day. It was the bridge of his ship, and a captain looks best on the bridge. He was moody, because in these last weeks he had found that, however little a captain may do on his bridge, he may still make some sort of a mess. Two or three times he had almost had to act in some way or other, to take an absolute plunge, adopting one course and rejecting another. That was the trouble: alternatives were like horses; he couldn't guess which was a winner. So Claude had tried hard, each time, to take either both courses or none, and now some captious god in the G.H.Q. heaven was not taking this so well as he might. Rumours of grand muddles at Bligny began to circulate in Olympus. "Silly little devil!" Colin was soon to hear a dangerous Brigadier-General say of Claude. "Of two evils, choose both—that's his idea."

In giving the Bligny billet to Claude, the proper person concerned had not entertained extravagant hopes. Barbason, he had said at the time, wasn't a flyer; still he was clearly fed up with the job he had had before. And the new Bligny show was too much of a pearl to cast before any New Army swine. So the proper person had hoped as hard as he could about Claude, and then had looked the other way as hard as he could, hoping no harm would come. But Claude made a truly wonderful mess of it all. What made things worse was the way that opportunities for making messes were growing. The show itself grew, as everything grew in that tropical army. More and more

officers came after Colin had gone. The work of some of these had all sorts of civilian connections. Visitors came, British and foreign, some of them famous, some subterraneanly powerful, some open-eyed and quick-witted. They went away, all over the earth, telling funny stories of croppers that Claude had come in his kingdom. Colin heard some of them. Faint but disturbing echoes of horrid laughter found their way round, even to Claude. He grew angry first at all this vulgar demand for the unsoldierly cleverness that fools called efficiency. But he grew anxious too, for G.H.Q. had been weak before now in the face of the howlings of beasts; men had been thrown to the wolves. To be safe, he supposed he must get in some brainy bounder as an assistant at Bligny.

With mingled pride and embarrassment Claude found, on reflection, how few brainy bounders he knew. Colin was much the brainiest of the few. A beast, but a clever beast. And Colin, he fancied, was only marking time just at present. Claude gallantly fought down his natural aversion, went to see Colin, and found him sparkling with health and good-humour after three hours' squash racquets. Claude set forth his proposition frankly. The trout-fishing at Bligny was not surpassing, but it was good. There was some work, it was true, but no coolie work of routine to be done on the nail, as at G.H.Q. proper, and no office hours. No Generals came blowing in to inspect. And all the great people from London, who ran things, came through the place sooner or later. Colin would meet them at Bligny. A clever devil like him would put it all over them, so as to do himself no end of good.

There was certainly something in that, Colin thought. He thought a good deal. The tall ship of his warlike career had lately been lying becalmed, and Heaven knew how much longer these doldrums might last. He knew that Claude had been slipping up, with good comic effect. He might slip up more, and then—— Yes, there were good troubled waters at Bligny; there might be a little good fishing, besides that for the trout. He temporised, and prepared.

While, for some weeks, he continued to do so, things went no better at Bligny. G.H.Q. rocked with mirth at Claude's misadventures. Pedantic precisians began to ask how this entertainment helped to beat Germany. Comic paragraphs crept into London and Paris newspapers. Somebody asked a sarcastic question in Parliament. Then at last it was felt that Claude had to go. But some of the great and the wise were sorry for Claude. They felt he had his points. Nosing civilians had hounded him out of his job. The like might happen to any one. So the wise and the great said he should stay for a month more, and meanwhile be given a

little something to make him feel better. Claude's D.S.O. was the most piquant thing in the next list of rewards for special gallantry and devotion. A month after this piece of justice appeared in the 'Gazette,' Claude got his orders to hand over the Bligny command—yea, to hand it over to the forethoughtful Colin.

"You know why I'm unstuck?" Claude said to his officers when the blow fell. "Because March is a New Army man. Some ticks in the press have been blowing hot air about the 'Regular Army trade union'—saying it corners all the good jobs—that sort of bilge. So some New Army man has got to be jumped into something—any old job,—just to have him ready to show. All very well if there weren't a war on. But how're we to win if they're always taking the heart out of the backbone of the Army?" Claude, you see, was no great commander of metaphors, either. "I know one thing," he continued, "I'm not taking any hand in this ramp."

To keep this vow not to touch pitch, Claude, strictly speaking, did not "hand over" to Colin at all. He never explained to Colin the work of the place, the lie of the land, the things that had to be seen to. A stand had to be made against all this handing over to the unworthy, so Claude felt, and went out for the day in his car. He did this every day of the week during which he was to hand over, Colin and he being both in the house. He breakfasted early, so as not to see Colin. Towards the end of one of these last breakfasts some tactless officer let fall a hint that a few tips about the routine of the show might help the new commander to vanquish the Germans.

"No, let him rip," said Claude, with an air of stern virtue. "If he slips up, all the better,—show that wars are not won by sham soldiers."

Colin came in at the moment, and Claude left it at that, and finished his coffee inflexibly. Already his car stood at the door; another long day's service to the petrol trade had dawned. He gone, Colin frankly commended his love of the road and of his kinsfolk. "It's time he hopped round," Colin said to the rest of the table, "and talked to those uncles." No "reserve" or "discretion" for Colin. War, he said, was quite enough of a morgue anyhow, without that.

XI.

For the next two months Colin was kept pretty busy. The chase engaged him by day. He rode a great many partridges down on the swelling chalk-hills, where the air and the turf were divine. A sterner task was teaching an Irish retriever how to course hares. At night, any time he could

spare from French billiards and bridge, he employed in making up war arrears of light reading. Unto his officers he did as he would that his superiors should do unto him. "*Continuez, mes enfants,*" he would benignantly say to them, whatsoever they did. After a Claude, he said, the land ought to have rest for some years. As to the men, he quoted distinguished authorities on the subject of "trusting the lads." He owned that he desired his command to have the charms of an ancient and untended garden, diverse and engaging with wayward self-sowing flowers, unmarred by the desolating militarist symmetries and uniformities of geometric "carpet" flower-beds. In short, even as Claude had trusted, Colin "ripped."

He ripped so visibly and audibly that long before the next harvest of decorations had time to come in, he was, even in G.H.Q.'s clement eyes, "ripe for booting," as Claude elatedly said. And booted he was, in his turn. But to boot Colin now was like booting a large polygonal stone. It might hurt. Not for nothing had Colin practised all his social charms at Bligny for the last two months. Many visitors—editors, politicians, miscellaneous powers of light or of darkness—had gone back to England enslaved by Colin's little ways. One enamoured magnate had said before going away: "If any old fool in the Army tries to get in your way, let me know." Colin had formed a Pretorian Guard, upside down—a little band of lusty civilians ready to hustle an army.

At Colin's cry for help his trusty bravoes fell to work like firemen. They pulled long wires, spread sinister rumours, warned proper persons, and made incipient booming sounds through certain megaphones of the press which were known to be capable of giving forth, when in full blast, the most horrific bellowings. Nervous superior officers sought to appease Colin with long leave at home. He only used it to prime his redoubtable backers with nastier facts and more vitriolic suggestions.

You see, he was in a quite strong position: he had no regiment to be bundled back to; his unit was "General List"; so he might win, but he could not be smashed; he was dormy. He took up high ground—that the "Old Army gang" had pushed him out by jades' tricks; that, if he had to go back to civil life now with a black mark to his name, some of those wanglers must howl for it. Then he would moderate slightly this rhadamantine tone, and would temper justice with mercy; if they had the sense to rub out the black mark, he would not be vindictive. But he must have something done to prove to the world that he had done his duty and not been turned down in disgrace.

"Oh, give him his blasted M.C. and be done with it," somebody said at last, looking

up from an office table at somebody else.

"Afraid we can't, sir," said somebody else. "This new rule, you know, sir — about keeping M.C.'s for things done in action."

"Oh, damn! D.S.O., then."

"Very good, sir."

So Colin left with a new red and blue stain on his coat, and none at all on his character as a soldier. He bore no grudge against his persecutors. He was too deeply amused. What tickled him most was that he was the very last, he believed, of all the old-world D.S.O.'s, the men to whom the gaud came, like the Garter, with "no damned merit about it." A rule came into force, almost immediately after, that D.S.O.'s were not to be given any longer for telephoning or clerking, or any other mode of escape from the Germans; they were all to be for the mere hack-work of fighting.

"I'm like the last Groom of the Posset," said Colin, "or Clerk of the Royal Backstairs. I'm the Last British Wolf. I ought to be stuffed, when I die, and bought for the nation, and put up on the Horse Guards Parade. It has a kind of brain, you know, the dear Old Regular Army; its madness has method. For three years of war all of it gorges itself with these D.S.O.'s—I mean, all of it that is not busy fighting. Meanwhile it invents the M.C., and settles on that also, till every unconscientious objector in France has got one or both. Then it sees all the Vandals and Goths of the New Army approaching the sanctuaries; so up goes this rule. It hath a twofold operation, like old Falstaff's drinks—keeps out any future Staff crowd, and it runs up the stock for the crowd who got in on the ground-floor. Look at my own little investment. Every new D.S.O. from this day forth will only prove more and more what a terrible fellow I was in the trenches."

I found that Claude, too, gave the new regulation his blessing. We met and dined, on my own way back from a leave, at the splendid new G.H.Q. Officers' Club at Montreuil. Presently the benign operation of Louis Roederer, 1906, slightly unlaced and unbuttoned the fine Prussian greatcoat and boots of Claude's mind. "I seriously think," he seriously said, "that at least a large proportion of these decorations ought to be given for purely physical acts of valour. Otherwise they may lose caste, as it were, in the sight of the public. You may say to me, 'Why not just do our duty and let the public be damned?' Still the public is there, and it's only fair to ourselves to mind, in some slight degree, what it thinks. When I got my own D.S.O. and M.C. I knew myself, and I think my friends knew, that I had earned them. But how is the public to know, or even to guess? All you can do to help it, and make the most hard-earned distinction worth having, is to keep them connected, in

people's minds, with the more obvious sorts of good work—front-line stunts and so on,—the only things, I suppose, that the man in the street can understand about soldiering."

I tried to work this clear in my mind, assisted by the illuminating radiance of the H.A.C. band, the foaming grape of Eastern France, and the beautiful W.A.A.C. waitresses dressed as comic-opera gitanas—all rendered curiously intoxicant by the sound of the rain on the roof and the imminence of my return to a little wet home in the earth of the Salient. "So the bread of the children," I construed, thinking aloud, "ought to be sometimes — rather often — given to dogs, because somehow its being half-eaten by dogs makes it still more nice for the children?"

"I don't call those brave fellows in the trenches dogs," said Claude somewhat distantly. He had a way of talking about the trenches, to us who lived in them, that made us feel it must only be in some incomplete, unreal sense that we lived there at all; whereas in a spiritually higher and more valid sense he, the authentically rugged soldier, abode there himself, so that, in the sight of Heaven, his were war's thorns, and ours her roses.

"Nor I," said I, "really," somewhat discomfited. I scarcely ever touch irony without getting into some mess and showing up badly.

Claude, still severe, said, "And I wouldn't exactly call the Staff children."

"Nor I," said I, feeling I must have been rude.

"Then I don't see your point," Claude austerely pursued.

"No?" said I, still believing that somewhere or other I had one, but not feeling quite sure. And how could one waste in ill-humour the last night of music and light, and the shine of clean glasses and white tablecloths?

XII.

I next heard of Claude from Colin, in London. A portion of me had gone the way of all flesh in the Salient, and Colin came to liven me up in a desolate Mayfair palace used as a hospital. Colin never grudged the War Office's time to any work of good-nature. Some men took it all for themselves.

"You've not heard about Claude?" he answered my question. "Why, Claude has entered into his kingdom. Claude has done the impossible, the unthinkable—found a new seam, a very Bonanza, where the most piercing eyes in the Army had only seen level sand. You know how all the princes and counsellors of the earth go out to visit Douglas Haig. D. H. believes they must all be longing to get sniped and bombarded, just because he likes it him-

self. So, in pure kindness of heart, he puts them into a car and packs them off for long days at the front. But Claude really knoweth man's heart. He has found them a way of escape—some sort of 'safety first' apparatus, no one quite knows what—whether it's a quiet shebeen in the wilds of the Somme where they can lie *perdus* all day, till it's time to go home, or a whole dummy battlefield, well out of harm's way, with old German helmets and rifles lying about for the visitors to absorb as war souvenirs. Some brain-wave like that."

Perhaps I looked puzzled. How could a mere Acting Major have so happy a thought, and no Colonel or General knock him down and take it away and use it himself?

"Oh, Claude worked the flotation all right," Colin assured me. "Claude knew his chief, Blunt, was a fool with a temper. So he unfolded his little idea at nine on a morning when old Blunt was looking his cheapest and blackest.

"'Think it a good idea, do you?' said Blunt. 'Well, I think it a damn bad idea, so you shall work it out yourself, and don't come whining to me when you've failed.' Can't you imagine him saying it?"

Yes, I knew that dodge of drowning new-born reformers like kittens, in bucketfuls of detail.

"Of course," Colin said sagely, "Blunt was right, in a way. If you're a downy old serpent, you don't want any Infant Hercules kicking about. And yet Blunt was a fool. Claude had got him on the ground hop, just as he'd planned. For then he was able to go right on with his plan of the funk-hole. He did, and now this contraption of his is the envy of all G.H.Q. They say the proud and the great of this world are tumbling over each other to get in at the door. I hear that unless you're of royal blood, or a Premier, Claude becomes quite short and dry with you. Once he had two live Kings and two Queens in the place, all at once—all the court cards in one hand—the sort of thing people write to the 'Field' about. When he comes home from the wars he'll sell his visitors' book and buy land and live on his rents. When the august go away they always give him an Order apiece before stepping into the car. His Legion of Honour is said to be lost in the crush. It's thought the ribbons will soon go all round his back, like a gym. belt, in a broad band. I fear it can't last, though."

"Why?" said I. "Are there not enough Kings in the world?"

"When a rather small hen," said Colin, "finds a large hunch of bread in the run, is a welter-weight cock to look on unmoved? Is Blunt, because he has been a fool once, to be a fool always? Believe me, he suffers remorse for his harshness to Claude. He will say, 'I have sinned.' He will

undo the past. He will reorganise the establishment. Claude will be in the outer darkness, and Blunt will feed all the auriferous geese out of his own lily hand."

XIII.

Then Colin talked about himself. He always had frankness, almost to the point of disease. He was, he said, eaten by care, because he had never yet failed to overtrump little Claude, and now little Claude had played such a whacking big trump. Colin said he had known an old woman once, in the country, who died of lying awake at night, fearing the patchwork quilt of the old woman next door was getting on faster than hers. Colin avowed he was hag-ridden too, with the thought of that textile mosaic on Claude's bosom expanding swiftly and inexorably. Things, he said, must be thought out, lest he should die.

With Colin, to think was to talk; his thought worked best along a kind of paper-chase track of vivid words laid for the pursuing intellect by the forerunning tongue. So there he sat, by my bed, and made more picturesquely clear, to himself as well as to me, the thing that had struck him most in all his war travels across Northern France, between the coast and our front—how, as he went east, the ribbons on passing men's breasts seemed always to die down and wither just as the corn and the roses did, by the road, till on the wastes of thistle and poppies where the shell-fire began you would seldom see a decorated man. He thought, aloud, of that Brigade H.Q. where he had slept for a resonant fortnight—his nearest point of approach to the firing line. That thrice-wounded Major there had not had a ribbon at all. None of the officers and men who had come in to that place from the actual front had had any. Colour had only begun to break forth again where, on Colin's way back to the sea, he had passed a Divisional H.Q. five miles farther west—"first streaks of auroral rose breaking," Colin said, "only—not in the East. No stars in the East; precious little dayspring to visit it—

"'In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.'

"And then it was only at Corps Headquarters, twenty miles farther away from the fight, that the real noon came, all the flora of valour well out, the 'high midsummer pomp,' and so forth, fully on. The Army H.Q. again, when I got there, seemed like the Tropics. I've worked it out that on the average the number of ribbons a British officer gets in this war varies in direct propor-

tion to the square of his distance from the front. It's a 'law,' like the laws about heat and the conservation of energy."

I knew he hadn't worked it out before; he was only doing it now, led on by his own talk, that wildly intuitive advance-guard of his marching mind. And then, from ascertained facts, unquestionable laws, he went on visibly to speculate. Why should the working of any such law of nature as this—a law of the nature of man—be interrupted by any mere physical accident such as a sea? Was it not of the very nature of things that the London clays should be to the payable sands of Boulogne and the rich quartz rock of Montreuil as these soils were to the utter deserts of Ypres and La Bassée? All civilisation, the great world movement, had always been westward. Was not human experience now confirming this scientific hypothesis?—rain ribbons as it might in maritime France, it poured in Whitehall. That was the centre of things; there all the fountains of honour played most freshly and amply, unexhausted as yet with watering the thirsty fields of France.

Colin left me in rather a hurry at last. He had seen a great light. Things had come clear. He had to be off and withdraw his application for fresh employment in France. Not there, but on British soil, must Claude be outshone.

The job that Colin, under this new inspiration, sought from the proper person, and presently got, was, I fancy, that of a kind of occasional A.D.C., to be lent to august foreigners passing through town on their way to visit our front. Princes and Premiers, Marshals and Admirals, Colin saw them safe through the great wicked city. Claude might draw on them later, but Colin tapped the stream nearer its source. He had his reward. When I caught sight of him next the thin red lines across his tunic had been—well, reinforced.

This narrative has to end without any climax. If it were fiction it might, no doubt, culminate in some one superlative masterpiece of acquisition by one or other of its heroes. But life does not work in that way: we constantly have to put up with the ineffectiveness of truth. The two seemed to pass out of my sight like two racing yachts on a day of light airs. First one of them would catch a little local breeze and skim away with a lead, and then would run into some patch of dead air; while the other would pick up a puff and be carried ahead, to be then becalmed in his turn. I heard they looked most beautiful, with three full rows of ribbons apiece, like commanders-in-chief, and that people turned round to look at them in the street, marvelling that men so young should have had time for so much valour.

IN THE LITTLE NEW COUNTRIES.

BY MAJOR LINDSAY BASHFORD.

XI.

"THE Land without a Clock," said the Lett philosopher, looking at me humorously across the table.

We were dining at Otto Schwarz's famous restaurant in Riga, where the hearty Baltic cookery which despises kickshaws finds its best expression. It was nearly ten o'clock, and still people were dropping in casually for dinner. I commented on this. The Lett philosopher knows his philosophic world from Oxford to Beyrout. The people of oppressed races have the knack of broad-mindedness; they escape from local tyranny when they can. People who spend their lives in being chivied from pillar to post by domineering bullies end up by acquiring a lot of information as to the nature of posts and pillars. When the little new countries worked through to independence, it was astonishing how many travelled and worldly-wise Letts, Esths, and Lithuanians came pouring back from every corner of the globe to give them a helping hand.

"The Land without a Clock," the Lett philosopher repeated, smiling. "Why, even our music-halls don't think of beginning until nearly midnight!"

"Where does your Land extend?" I asked, curiously impressed.

He gave a wide and whimsical gesture.

"Everywhere eastward . . . sunward . . . of the machine-souled German," he said. A hard glint came into his blue Baltic eyes.

He spoke of Time and Life. Here on the Baltic seaboard, for example, it matters not an atom should you arrive at a given destination half a day late. Unhampered by the modern and upstart convention of Time, no one displays anxiety concerning your absence, and your welcome will be just as hearty, however prolonged its postponement. You will not be allowed to cut short your visit. That is ruled out. Only, instead of reaching home in good time for dinner as you had planned, your plans "go hang." Your hosts feed you enormously, until time and space become merely abstract conceptions. With childlike delight in an unexpected situation, they will organise an impromptu "jamboree" for you, summoning all the neighbours. Right through the night will the fun be kept up and well into the following morning, regardless of everything except the merriment of the hour.

You will reach home during the course of the next day, complacently surprised to find, elderly though you may be, how little you have missed your pillow! "Sleep?" say these gay northern children. "You can make up for that during the long dark months of winter. When the sun is with you nearly always, and there is very little night, you sleep as little as possible. Light is too precious. It is the soul of the world."

The inconsequence of these Baltic peoples is very delightful. In one pleasant household nine o'clock breakfast never thought of being eaten until after eleven, so that I could always put in a ride to the wooded sea-shore between the sounding of the breakfast gong and the actual attack on the grilled kidneys and superb Baltic ham. The younger members of this jovial family shrieked with glee as they related how, at the wedding of the eldest sister, it was discovered on the return of the large hungry throng of guests from the church to the homestead, which is miles from anywhere, that no one had remembered to order the wedding breakfast!

"Do not imagine," said the Lett philosopher at Otto Schwarz's, catching the rich glow of purple Burgundy against the light through his glass—and wine is drunk on the Baltic from burly and stalwart beakers, none of your flimsy French fiddle-faddles—"do not imagine that any chance inconsequence as regards the practical conception of Time which you may come across amongst us implies any lack of energy or lesser sum of work done.

"Time is a tyrant who acquired authority as he marched westwards. The East gives him little credit, and rather despises his slaves as knuckling under to a very inferior philosophy of life. In a world of great spaces such as ours human concerns appear very small. Why should one day contain more urgent obligations than another? It is only in Western Europe that punctuality has assumed its cold and inhospitable domination. We, on the edge of the unchanging East, question whether the arbitrary division of life into hours and minutes has greatly added to human happiness or security."

He reminded me of the famous Russian novel which is mainly concerned with the hero's debate whether or no it was worth while to get out of bed on a certain dingy morning. "The point has its interest," reflected the Lett philosopher, helping himself abstractedly to another beaker of Burgundy. "It embodies a good deal of Slav philosophy. Are we really less efficient, less happy, because we don't have family prayers sharp at eight-thirty, sherry and a Marie biscuit sharp at eleven, cutlets and apple-tart (he had been to Oxford) sharp at one, and dinner, inexorable as the Last Trump, at half-past seven?"

We went on to an official Lett "cup of tea," and it was broad daylight before I could get away to my hotel. I had been very comfortable there, by virtue of a preposterous exchange, with a set of rooms big enough to give a ball in, for the modest figure of eight shillings a day. That morning, however, the new Bolshevik ambassador had arrived at Riga with an enormous suite, all heavily married, and a swarm of motor-cars driven by fierce and cadaverous soldiers in the notorious Trotsky wolf-head helmets. The ambassador had absorbed the whole hotel except my rooms, had demanded peremptorily that I, a mere Briton, should be forthwith evacuated, and had proceeded to order an immediate hot bath. As he had come directly from the heart of Soviet Russia, I had thought the hot-bath idea an excellent one. But as it meant that his Soviet Excellency monopolised the only bathroom in the place from nine till one, I could not but reflect that life in the Land without a Clock might have its handicaps!

Reaching the hotel in the crisp dawn, I ascertained that the new diplomatist had been paying a round of visits. I do not know whether they had been official, but they had certainly been cheery. For an hour or more the slither and scrape of diplomatic Soviet feet went on in the room above me, as I tried to snatch a little slumber, and a scratchy Soviet gramophone ground raucously through the treacly phrases of the 'Destiny' waltz.

Destiny . . . what a choice!

XII.

The engine which was detailed to take us the next morning through the great Baltic forest to the little town of Wenden for our visit to Jollity Lodge was far too dilapidated to heed any such artificial considerations as Time. War had left Lettland with but a scanty handful of locomotives with which to run her railways. Czarist Russia had hurriedly evacuated some to prevent them from falling into the hands of the invading Boche, and the Bolsheviks had, of course, omitted to hand them back again. Germany, in her turn, had appropriated nearly all the rest for her fight against the obstinate Briton. Plant and repair material had vanished likewise. Therefore, since locomotives, warranted sound in boiler and piston, cannot be bought like haberdashery round the corner, Lettland's scanty balance of engines had begun to suffer severely from overwork.

Before leaving the station at Riga I had walked up the platform out of curiosity to look at our engine. Never had

I conceived so ramshackle and haphazard an assemblage of rusty fragments of metal, so pathetic a picture of dilapidation! Everywhere gaps afforded vistas of a ghastly and ravaged interior. From a hundred crevices steam escaped in little sad puffs. Although stationary, the poor thing emitted from its exhausted vitals a despairing clank and clatter in interminable repetition, a 'Lohengrin' farewell in metal, a tragic lilt: I've done my best and I can't do more. I've done my best and I can't do more. It looked almost too tired to stand on its wheels; it looked like a cab-horse tackling its final suburban fare before being consigned to the Antwerp horse-knackers. Surely this pitiful dishevelled old ruin could not be expected to move our plump and prosperous special train!

I turned to the engine-driver almost as if to abuse him for cruelty to animals. He had joined me in contemplation of his engine. For once I had mistaken my Lettland. Whatever his private estimate of his charge, he was a Lett before he was an engineer; therefore he was an optimist, proud of his country and everything in it, confident of the capacity of the most overworked of Lett locomotives for heroic achievement when called upon. He patted its dingy coat in between the puffs of escaping steam much as the owner of a Derby winner pats his triumphant animal in the paddock at Epsom. His eyes shone with pride. Never had engine, he told me, so remarkable a record of achievement. Its miserable clanking swan-song was to him a pæan of triumph. "Get to Wenden?" said he scornfully. "This Lett engine could take you to London."

Somewhere a whistle sounded. The engine-driver sprang lightly into his cab, like some laurel-wreathed young Roman athlete into his chariot. The poor old engine seemed to call desperately but gallantly upon its final nervous force in a kind of spasmodic contraction of its whole being, appalling to contemplate. A violent access of pulmonary wheezing followed, and then, with a clang and clatter as if all its component parts were falling apart and on to the permanent way, the engine moved. We had started.

We were due at Jollity Lodge for lunch, and we arrived in time for high tea (hot roast pork, cooked to a turn, sausages and schnapps), which almost immediately merged into dinner (hot roast goose, more hot roast pork, cooked to a turn, sausages, Burgundy, and schnapps), which speedily merged into . . . but that shall be recounted later. The journey was unforgettable, but we had one casualty . . . our gallant old engine.

At intervals during the morning I descended from my compartment, and, easily keeping pace with the train, passed the

time of day with such of my acquaintances on the expedition as were awake. The majority slept the sleep of healthy tired children. They, too, had been guests at the official Lett "cup of tea." Knowing that a long morning was to be spent in the train, the Letts saw but little fun in going to bed in the ordinary dull way, so the "cup of tea" was kept merrily going until it merged into breakfast coffee. Proceeding thence to the Riga railway station they had curled up on the carriage seats, and there slept peacefully till nature called for lunch. They awoke to find us stranded in a profound and impenetrable forest.

It was our umpteenth breakdown, and yet I would not have missed any of them. The Baltic forests have a singular and stately beauty. They represent great possibilities of wealth, and are, if properly handled, the chief national asset of all the little Baltic countries. There are still traces of the steady forestry which the great landowners carried on; but there is danger now that the uncontrolled forces of nature may once more gain the upper hand if the trade in timber cannot soon be reopened. To keep a forest up to marketable trim is as delicate a matter, in its way, as to maintain a Rolls-Royce at concert pitch. Edges of silver birch and other thick-foliaged trees still protect the timber of tender age, and a strip of cleared land on either side of the single track of rail is a safeguard against fire from engines which, in a coalless country, of necessity burn wood.

Now and then, whilst our engine-driver, unquenchably hopeful, was hunting for the cause of an unexpected halt, or picking up pieces of his engine a hundred yards or so down the line, I made my way through the delicate belt of silver birch and into recesses of the elder forest itself. Here I, too, seemed to lose the sense of time, so profound were the silences which now surrounded me, so majestic the aisles of lofty trees, their foliage Gothic-arched, high above my head—endless stately aisles full of the cool dim gravity of some gigantic cathedral, and with the spring and powerful grace in their arches that tell of a Master Architect.

When nature is working on a big scale man must respond. Through these great forest regions of Central Europe turf rides are cut, slim green belts sweeping down into some wide and shallow valley and upwards to a distant horizon. Thence they lead, in similar gentle undulations, for scores of miles without sign of human habitation or activity. Traversing these it is impossible not to feel how small and ineffective have been the plans according to which, since the war, men have sought to adapt these stupendous natural resources to new human needs.

Cradled in antiquity as these countries are, the conditions

of working them to-day are nevertheless pioneer conditions. The big mental grasp and the broad and simple method of the pioneer are imperatively necessary to free them from the chaos and apathy left by the war. But authority, instead of passing into the hands of men capable of seeing and working on a big scale, impartially and with blunt common-sense, has been gathered up by an "intelligentsia" on the one hand, as in the little new countries, ardent, but utterly inexperienced, and on the other, as in Soviet Russia, dominated by a narrow and impractical fanaticism.

How often, and with what recurrent disappointment, since the Peace Conference, have we not scanned Europe for men big enough to tackle the problems of reconstruction, which are infinitely more complex than those of war. The Greeks found such a man in Venizelos, and, because he was too big for their petty jealousies, discarded him.

Thus, I think, the forest brought me to the heart of the problem of the little new countries. Its tremendous and elemental vastness was the measure of their task. The class of great landowners who, with all their shortcomings, had been trained and accustomed to deal in a large way with large matters, has vanished in the muddle of war. Mainly agricultural, these countries lack the solid central stratum, as we have it in England, of a manufacturing and business class, whose steady common-sense can generally be relied upon to hold the balance between enthusiasm and prejudice, the ardours of the apostle and the dead weight of the reactionary. Later, with the growth of industry, this valuable steady influence in the life of a State will make itself felt. At present the want of it points the dangerous contrast between the excitable "intelligentsia" at one end of the social scale, and, at the other, the smallholder almost wholly absorbed in extracting a livelihood from his little patch of land.

And next door to these little free Baltic peoples, for whom I had come to feel so warm an affection, Bolshevism is waiting, with its grim and desperate tyranny. The social and economic difficulties which must be tackled on the Baltic seaboard are repeated a dozen times in that part of Europe which is cut off from Allied support by a sullen and restless but increasingly formidable Germany and a bankrupt Austria. In these great regions of Eastern Europe Bolshevism is to-day the only force that has power and purpose. All else is makeshift. Often have Bolshevik leaders, without the slightest pretence of excusing the horrors they have perpetrated, reminded me how in the shambles of the French Revolution a new Europe was born. In the secret recesses of the Kremlin, Lenin and his

accomplices affect to be awaiting a still more wonderful birth, and already, let us note well, men whose wisdom is of the serpent are hastening to that sinister manger with their offerings of frankincense and myrrh on easy terms.

It is impossible to extract from the Bolshevik leaders any definition of Bolshevism. I have asked many of them to tell me in plain terms what they propose to put in place of the civilisation they are out to destroy. Their reply has always been a vague and heady recapitulation of Karl Marx shibboleths, but they can give no idea as to who will foot the bill for nectar and ambrosia in their new heaven, or pay the rates in their new earth. Half of them I believe to be callously cynical as to the constructive side of Bolshevism, while the other half are hypnotised by their own incantations.

So long as the noise of shattering kingdoms can exalt a bamboozled proletariat, Bolshevism will remain a formidable menace. To live, it must destroy. When it is seen to have nothing but phrases to offer a starving and desperate humanity, it will in its turn be destroyed. The attempts at communist institutions which it has set up in Moscow and Petrograd are trivial and muddled failures. But having destroyed Russia, it must look for fresh victims. It will undoubtedly seek to overrun the little Baltic countries in order to reach Germany. Poland will prove but a wax champion of the old order.

Bolshevism embodies all the discontent of the last fifty years in Europe; it battens in the sullen purlieus of mining and industrial districts and in the hysterical atmosphere of crowded factory slums. A shrewd and sturdy peasantry will have nothing to say to it. Already the Bolshevist leaders are apprehensive at the indifference with which their fulminations and visions are regarded by the peasants of Russia, and at the puny and insignificant figure Bolshevism cuts posturing amidst the eternal vastnesses of the steppes. They know, too, that the peasantry of the Baltic will not welcome them. Meanwhile their soldiers, flatly declining to be demobilised and sent home to impoverished villages, where there is neither food nor loot, are yelling for further conquests. Thus it is that the Bolsheviks, in a frenzied hysteria of fanaticism and fear, are bent on seeking new accomplices and new authority in the dingy back streets of Dortmund, Essen, Bologna, and Milan, and new revolutions to foster throughout Europe.

Against this danger and to ensure their own development, the little new countries must combine. Therein lies their only hope. Alone, and desperately poor, none of them can otherwise cope with their problems successfully. Lettland, Esthonia, and Lithuania must

bury their small jealousies. They have, and I think justly, scant belief in the power of the Allies or the League of Nations to come to their help in a sudden emergency. They must pull together. They must have a common banking system, a common scientific agricultural policy, a common coinage, and common Customs.

Rule by "intelligentsia" is always a hazardous business, because it tends to be at one moment indecisive, seeing too many sides to a question, and at another abruptly dictatorial. Enamoured of theory, it is apt to get out of touch with the humdrum needs of the people. You cannot rule a country unless you know the price of its potatoes.

So the eager young men who are trying to give the little new countries a solid start in life must be as simple in their methods of government as they are in their own ingenuous and open-hearted character. Above all, they must beware of the bureaucrat; of the petty official bully and of the pedant, equally obnoxious, and not unknown to us in Britain, who really believes that the secret of successful government lies in the filling up of many and complicated forms.

Already have I seen that inky cloven hoof sticking out from beneath paper-piled official tables. So jealous, for example, is Lettland of its resources, even of the most intimate and personal nature, that no one wishing to leave the country is allowed to take with him more articles of clothing in his portmanteau than are indicated on an official form with which he must provide himself before starting to pack. I am a seasoned traveller, but I confess to being startled at the exiguous nature of the wardrobe conceived by the Lettish Government—throwing back, perhaps, to some hardy instinct of the Bronze Age—as sufficient for me! And I had to devote a whole morning to getting the necessary official stamp on the necessary official permit authorising me to take out of the modern state of Lettland an extra pair of pyjamas!

Returning from a forest stroll on that eventful morning, I found our train disconsolate. After hours of valiant effort, the engine had indeed given up the ghost, and stood there, a tragic appearance beneath the arching and impassive trees, incapable of motion. Quite undisturbed, most of our hosts had gone forward along the track to ransack Lettland by telephone for another engine to rescue us. The remainder of the company, including the engine-driver, whose buoyancy remained intact, devoured sandwiches and apples, of which a supply had been wisely provided, and discussed the future of Lettland. Their enthusiasm held us, although we might conceivably have been as distant from our rescuing engine as Blackpool from Bexhill.

The full glory of mature afternoon made the little town of Wenden very pleasant in its green clearing of pasture-land. Here we were to transfer from the train to country carts. Lettland had clearly a flattering idea of our powers of endurance. Never were country carts more startlingly primitive. Two boards laid lengthways perched springless on sturdy wheels, with a thin handrail down the middle, and three horses roughly attached troika-fashion to one end! We clambered up, a perilous and apprehensive cavalcade. The road was a miniature Alpine range of huge cobbles and ruts, into which one peered as into some sombre and menacing crevasse. All Wenden had come to watch our departure. Wild shouts rang. We shut our eyes, and held on in grim desperation. All the horses dashed off simultaneously. In our mad progress through the town, I was certainly more out of my cart than in it. Sore and aching, I opened my eyes to find that the procession had stopped so abruptly that the middle horse of the cart next to mine was complacently licking the velour of my soft hat fashionably purchased at Scott's in Piccadilly! The horses had apparently stopped on their own initiative, and they started again with similar unexpectedness. In this fashion were we hurled for an hour across this sunny and superbly rolling landscape, all thought banished in the mere effort to hold on. Then, so absurd was our whole jack-in-the-box cavalcade, rocking, shouting, snorting, plunging, that I began to laugh. This was indeed a fit approach to Jollity Lodge!

And there, white and serene, high placed in an amphitheatre of elemental forest, was the lodge itself. Laughing still, I felt already the energetic spirit of the place as typical of the country and its attitude towards life. We called it Jollity Lodge, partly because the name suits it, and partly because its real name, like Przemysl, is an unconscionable blend of consonants and a sneeze!

XIII.

Jollity Lodge is a very well-organised Agricultural College, in which some hundred and fifty boys and girls, between the ages of sixteen and twenty, go through a practical and up-to-date course of study. Tremendous preparations had been made for our visit. The big clean rooms had been decorated with greenery. All the local notables had come to welcome us, and it was delightful at once to perceive the frank and friendly democratic spirit which prevailed everywhere. There was no obsequious kow-towing to magnates, because the little new countries have quietly abolished all mag-

nates excepting those of the mind. Through this group of professors, magistrates, soldiers, students, and peasant-farmers there ran a firm current of genial and unaffected good-fellowship, and I noticed often, during my visit, a modest consciousness of common national effort which was both touching and singularly impressive. It was pleasant to see a big grizzled man in well-worn country clothes, an agricultural scientist of European reputation, linking arms and talking eagerly with a keen young peasant-farmer working his hundred acres a few miles away.

The boys and girls, aglow with excitement, gave us a tumultuous reception. These sturdy young people live and work together, and certainly the vigorous atmosphere of Jollity Lodge offers a notable instance of successful co-education—a sunny contrast to the miasma of dark nervous excitement and morbid vice which has spread over the youth of a Bolshevik Russia that has defiantly thrown away its standards, and of a Germany whose standards are lying bedraggled in the mud!

Jollity Lodge, they told me proudly, is self-supporting: they build their own buildings, handle their own land and stock, weave their own clothes, and do their own housekeeping. The girls cooked the sumptuous "high tea" to which we were taken on arrival, and the younger boys made zealous waiters. Immense pains had been taken to provide us with national dishes of every kind, and our appreciation of them was evidently to be estimated by the amount we ate. The boy waiters had instructions to report our progress to the girl cooks at frequent intervals. A pathetic query came up from the kitchen as to my lack of appreciation of the roast pork course, simply because, kindly but firmly, I had declined a fourth helping!

And when, after tea, we set out on a survey of the estate, pleasant and glowing in the evening sunshine, these boys and girls, jolly young conspirators, delighted to lure me from the technical explanations of their teachers, of which they well knew I understood very little, to show me their own haunts and achievements. This strapping youngster had helped to build a neatly-tiled stable; another was in charge of the cows; the girls showed me seed-houses and looms; in an elder boys' study were the beginnings of a really good agricultural library; a group displayed their spick-and-span laboratory. Everywhere there were brisk effort and enthusiasm. They all talked nineteen to the dozen; but there was, I suppose, some infectious quality in their sheer vital youth which must have helped me to understand them, although my ignorance of Lettish was as thorough as theirs of English. And even if I was at times frankly at a loss, I could not fail to delight

in every evidence of the busy and keen life these boys and girls were living.

When we had been over the fields, the experimental sheds, the testing grounds, the forestry school, and so forth, my conspirators dragged me finally from the official procession. Helter-skelter, roast pork or no roast pork, we tumbled down a wooded hillside, emerging upon a clearing of quite aloof and unforgettable beauty. So abrupt were the descents on three of its sides that it almost seemed as if this tiny plateau were mysteriously poised, a fairy arena, high above the world upon the topmost delicate fronds of great forest trees. The panorama was stupendous: half a drowsy quiet world it seemed. There were a few wooden benches made by the boys in the carpenter's shop, and at each corner of the plateau, whose turf was beaten tightly down, stood tall, slim, wooden torch-holders of an almost classical austerity of shape.

This was the dancing-place of these young people. Hither they come in the evenings to join in ancient national dances, which are part and parcel of their jovial common life, an immemorial inheritance. The picture of this remote forest plateau, torch-lit on some deep and tranquil summer night, with the supple young dancing figures upon it, must be singularly beautiful!

The central dancing festival of the year in the Baltic countries is that of the Eve of Saint John, but the quaint ritual of it is certainly far older than Christianity. For it is midsummer's night, and who can tell what primitive and mysterious impulses bring these simple peasants on that night to kindle beacons on the hilltops and feast and dance there until far into the morning? Colonel Stephen Tallents, the brilliant young British High Commissioner to the new Baltic States, witnessed the pageant of these beacon-fires while travelling once on the great Petrograd road. He tells vividly how "a full ten of them gleamed across the dark wide country," and how "the voices of singing came across the meadows, choruses that rose and fell upon the wind, here dying and there taken up afresh, the words indistinguishable, but the tune perpetually the same." Round the beacons the ritual begins. Boys challenge the old women to sing. Whole birch-trees are set aflaring. Girls in white head-dresses move in chanting procession, arm in arm, and boys wreath birch fronds round their heads. Their song has a lilt at once wistful and haunting, and its words are naïve as the hearts of those who sing them. Here is Colonel Tallents' translation of a verse:—

"Johnnie was sitting on the little hill.
Lihgo! Lihgo!
On his shoulders he held a load of hay.
Lihgo! Lihgo!
'Come down, Johnnie, come down!
Lihgo! Lihgo!
Give your hay to my little calves.'
Lihgo! Lihgo!"

Returning from the dancing-place to the Big House, the girls left me to prepare for evening festivities, and the younger boys to snatch a few minutes' football while the light lasted. The elder boys took me farther afield, beyond the confines of their estate, so that I might talk with some of the smallholders working land in the neighbourhood. Their attitude, as I began to grasp it, to the future of their little nation, showed me how immensely vital and important, how necessarily wide in its scope, a place such as Jollity Lodge must be. In these Baltic countries, where the cultivation of the land is the dominant preoccupation, the source of wealth, and the condition of security, where the landlord class has been abolished, and the professional interests dependent on it have dwindled almost to nothing, practically everybody must know about the land, for nearly everybody will be directly occupied in working it. As fast as possible, returning refugees and gladly homing emigrants are being settled in holdings. All these boys and girls in Jollity Lodge are being trained for life on the land. There is to be no leisured class in the little new countries. The development and interests of the land will guide the activities of men and women with legal or scientific brains, and the growth of industry and shipping will be directly dependent on the skill of those handling agricultural problems.

In a community planned on such lines, it is clear that Jollity Lodge and its fellows can be no mere technical schools confined to a rigidly scientific curriculum. They embody the whole spirit and motive of the new free countries. Their teaching must be wide in its range, because their pupils are not destined merely to be tenants, concentrated on making the utmost out of a cabbage-patch while their tenure of it shall last. They are to be land-holders, State-makers. No potentate of the past, with his twenty square miles of absolute dominion, had more direct and intimate concern in the fortunes of his country than has the young Baltic farmer of to-day, proudly at work on his own hundred acres. Jollity Lodge must capture the spirit and emulate the perspective of a Harrow, a Cheltenham, and a Sorbonne combined! Its task is to produce the type of men and women that will keep the little new countries going under the conditions they have boldly imposed upon themselves in the flush of their freedom. From what I saw of the eager, broad-minded, and sensible boys and girls of Jollity Lodge, I think it is on the right road to do so.

The smallholders, too, seemed confident. They are very short of most things that farmers need, but their co-operative societies and groups are doing quite astonishingly well. I saw the time-tables of some of the state-imported travelling

threshing and reaping machines, and everything was working out satisfactorily. Buildings were generally good, and the cottages quite beautifully looked after. There is certainly little downright hardship, and a great deal of good hope.

It is wonderful in these little establishments how much the old people help. The size of the plot of land allotted to a man depends on his means of working it, and the grandparents are always reckoned in. The proud delight of some of these sturdy old men in their children's achievements was pleasant to witness, for they themselves had been little better than slaves. The old women generally look after the cows and poultry. Milk was eagerly brought me, warm from the milking, in quaint earthen pitchers. As these peasants, old and young, gathered round us in the final span of daylight, ingenuously curious to see visitors from that distant country whose free institutions they so profoundly admire, I felt once more and happily confident that this new Baltic freedom is to be a fine and invigorating factor in our reconstructed Europe.

Before the outspoken and strong simplicity of this splendid peasantry of the Baltic—so curiously like our own peasantry in their slow, sincere ways of thought—the gimcrack dexterities of the Continental politics in which I had been striving to find purpose and fairness for so many months seemed suddenly trivial. The specious complacent politicians, the hysterical "intelligentsia" of the towns the dirty whispered corridor intrigues, the dreary cynical browbeat and wheedle of most of post-war Continental public life — all these mattered nothing. From the earth, as always, comes the strength, and to those who live closest to it the strength comes truest. With this peasantry the fate of the little new countries lies: with these unbowed, plain-spoken, wrinkled old men; with these straight, healthy young mothers; with this burly farmer urging every fibre of his being to earn enough to buy a third horse that he may carry his own produce to market; with those boys and girls in the big white house on the hill preparing to take up their heritage.

The big white house is indeed more than the unfailing source of wise counsel to the countryside. It is the cradle of the liberties of these new free peoples. Here, in the bad years of the Russianisation, when frenzied efforts were being made to crush out every spark of Lettish nationality, the torch was boldly kept burning. Here, secretly, Lettish hopes matured, Lettish ambitions took concrete form. Hither came that strange and impressive figure, now Chief of State. His lectures were dutifully technical, but to his Lett audience every word, every exhortation, meant

something very different. He spoke in symbolic code. He appeared to be discussing the breeding of cattle, but was really, through ingenious symbolism, campaigning on the freedom of his race! And the grave, burly Lett farmers and students who listened to him so earnestly and took such copious notes, never once by glance or smile gave the delicious joke away! The Russian bullies never guessed. Lettland won her freedom. How I wish I had been present at one of those cold and academic lectures on the breeding of cattle!

That night, after dinner and speeches—both copious, for the Lett orates as heartily as he eats—Jollity Lodge gave itself to living up to my nickname for it. The whole neighbourhood thronged into the big brightly-lighted hall. The boys and girls, with infectious zest, swung off into national dances and choruses. Everybody joined in under the indefatigable leadership of the Colonel commanding the district. A strapping jovial figure of a man, smartly dressed in the British service dress that has admirably equipped most of the Lett army, the Colonel led us all to the maddest of pranks and performed gyrations in mid-air worthy of a Mordkin! We raced and shouted with him, and in the general gay tumult the stupid discipline of Time seemed made to be flouted!

"But when," I asked the panting and perspiring Director in the momentary interval between one mad frolic and the next—"when do these girls and boys go to bed?"

"Generally about ten," was his reply. Then he beamed genially at the whole rollicking, laughing crowd of them. "But, of course, to-day's Sunday," he added. Bang went the music to a new and intoxicating lilt. "Come on!" shouted the Director to me, and bounded into the hurly-burly like an elderly gazelle!

The merry hours fled by. There was no sign of departure; the fun simply increased. But we had a Peace Conference to attend the next morning in Riga, and Riga was far away. I made tentative inquiries, and was met blankly: we were having such a good time, why should we worry about to-morrow? It hadn't occurred to anybody to make arrangements for our getting back. The engine which had brought us to Wenden had had to hurry off immediately to a job of work at the other end of Lettland, and Heaven alone knew where we should find another! The grave and reverend professors were cheerfully incorrigible. The boys threatened physical obstruction to any attempt at leaving, and the girls, on the wise feminine principle of "feed the brute," scurried down to the kitchens to contrive yet more alluring tit-bits!

It was the Colonel commanding the district who at length saw logic in our position. He took our cause in hand, though

I think he secretly scorned us as slaves to conscience and punctilio. He telephoned for an engine. He borrowed College blankets. He spirited us through the scullery to the yard where our cavalcade of country carts was sleepily waiting in the moonlight. He stole off to the stables to find his own charger. In the house the merry turmoil had recommenced; our absence had not yet been observed. He would lead us back to the little town of Wenden. We clambered in like stealthy operatic conspirators. Then a horse stampeded across the cobbled yard, and the secret was out.

The music stopped with a jerk. There was a sudden ominous silence. A door banged. Perched on our crazy vehicles we waited, tense to the crisis. Windows were flung wide. Out poured the jolly shouting throng. Our ruse was discovered. Already boys were pelting down the slope to close gates against us. The tumult of laughter and mock reproach rang to the serene sky. Could we escape?

Our dapper confederate never faltered. He snapped out an order as if to bustle the lot of us "over the top," and tore off down the white curving road as if an infernal Bolshevik were on pillion behind him. Clutching our frail and springless board carts, shouting and laughing farewells, we careered madly after him, bumping, tumbling, scraping, lunging with half merry Lettland at our heels. Never was so wild and reckless a cavalcade! Every minute of safety was sheer miracle. We gained on our pursuers. Helpless with laughter at the sight of us, they at last gave up the chase, and, boys and all, breathless yet frantically cheering, stood to watch our final, mad, superb swerve as we swung round the edge of the grassy slope in the white light of the moon and out upon the Wenden road.

Ah! those simple, sincere men and women of the little new countries, in whom the clear spirit of childhood subsists undimmed—who know, as we British know, both how to work and play, and who are so finely proud of their new freedom, so determined to make good. . . . I leave this as my last impression of them: a mad prank in the moonlight, an encounter stimulated by a zest and directness and cleanness of soul that I wish Europe had more of in these difficult days wherein a new world has somehow to be contrived. I had to hasten back to the old, squalid, political routine. The very next day a Bolshevik leader, swaggering and shifty-eyed, an incongruous and repellent figure in a medieval Riga saloon of exquisite furnishings, told me he had just signed his fifteenth treaty on behalf of Soviet Russia. It took me all my time to refrain from reminding him that he and his had not respected the obligations of any one of them.

Then the day came when, with the little new countries

behind me, a thin, fast darkening coast-line, I bucketed westwards down the Baltic shallows in the scrubbiest of tramp tubs, one of a sodden and miserable crowd of passengers. It rained. It blew. It was wretchedly and inhospitably cold, this choppy October Baltic. There were no cabins worthy of the name, and no food. There were many times the legal number of passengers, and certainly well under half the legal quantity of crew, and most of both were noisily sea-sick. At length, through the chilly slicing of spray and the murk of a thoroughly nasty evening, I could dimly discern another and sinister coast. Now and then a slant of tawny sunlight would edge its sullen outlines with smouldering fire. There lay Germany, brooding and watchful, the beaten, mortified, violent Germany I had come to know so well, and to which I must now return—this formidable, desperately ambitious Germany, infinitely subtle, ready for any new vindictive cruelty!

And I cheered myself on that dark, wet, crowded deck by recalling our helter-skelter scamper down the moonlit slope from Jollity Lodge to the tiny railway station at Wenden, the merry laughter that followed us, and all the dear eager goodwill that I had found in the little new Baltic countries.

THE VOYAGE HOME.

BY ALAN GRAHAM.

CHAPTER XI.

PETER BROWN experienced the shock of a catastrophe. His pulses seemed to halt abruptly, and then dash forward hurriedly but heavily. His first feeling was one of responsibility for this disaster. He glanced quickly at the man seated on his right, who, a moment before, had been an apparently care-free centre of merriment.

Honiton's face was pale and startled, and his eyes, for a bare moment, were expressive with apprehension. Then, as it seemed with an effort, he controlled himself, and started to his feet with a natural astonishment.

The detective had captured that first look, however. What did it signify? His first conclusion, leapt at unthinkingly, was that his prisoner was the thief, and his first impulse was to rise and accuse him. Had not Honiton more than once spoken of these very jewels? The words came back to his mind—

"What a haul Lady Pilth's jewels would be for somebody!" . . . And was not Honiton as good as convicted of—but, hang it! why should a man, already under arrest, burden himself with a fresh crime when he could have no hope of disposing of the proceeds? It was absurd.

Peter Brown breathed an inaudible sigh of relief as this argument occurred to him. Yet if their mutual relationship became known, would not the whole weight of suspicion fall upon Honiton? Assuredly.

Since the relief of his prisoner's voluntary return from Valetta, a strong bias in his favour had developed in the detective's mind. Honiton had acted as a sportsman and a gentleman in the face of a temptation that must have been formidable in the extreme. Having sacrificed his liberty to his word, was it likely that within a few hours he would commit a crime from which he could hardly hope to obtain any benefit?

So far as Honiton was concerned, then, Peter Brown's difficulty was eased. There remained the question of himself. Was it not his plain duty to proclaim his connection with Scotland Yard and offer his services? He shrank from the necessity, and charged his reluctance to the bargain he had made with Honiton, though

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subconsciously he knew that his unwillingness to make his profession known was attributable to Joan Conliffe. He feared that he might lower himself in her eyes, that he might lose the treasure of her friendship.

After all, he argued plausibly, a detective would be more likely to score a success if his presence aboard were unsuspected. True; but perhaps the captain should be told in confidence, conscience suggested, only to be brushed aside by the specious contention that for all any one knew to the contrary the captain might himself be the thief.

Thus argument followed inclination, and Peter Brown succeeded in convincing himself that silence was his only course. Even that look of fear in Honiton's eyes explained itself away quite naturally. He, already under arrest, would be the first to see how suspicion would light on him, and would dread the exposure that Peter Brown had actually contemplated.

A mere matter of seconds elapsed while these thoughts whirled through the detective's mind, and he had reached his conclusion while yet the scene on deck remained static. His course of action determined, he was able to give his whole attention to the other actors in the drama.

Sir Evan Pilth, his loosened brace dangling grotesquely behind him, was hammering wildly upon the door of Captain Speedley's deck-cabin, his emotional mind having, for the moment, swamped his dignity.

It was the attitude of his fellow-passengers, however, that aroused the detective's professional interest. His observant eyes glanced from one to another, as it were snapshotting their first startled poses for development later.

The face of the Honourable Stephen Corris expressed the eager cynical curiosity of the born scandal-monger. His small eyes sparkled as he doubled forward in his deck-chair the better to view the spectacle of the disordered barrister. Sympathy he showed none.

Cohun Balke pushed forward with professional interest, eager to hear particulars of the loss, his dark protuberant eyes full of commiseration for the victim of such a crime. Diamonds!

Jocelyn Upton was frankly, her mother politely, curious. The matter held no unusual interest for them apart from its mere novelty, and the elder woman had the usual English abhorrence of a scene. Peter Brown's quick eyes passed them with hardly a pause, assured that here he need not burden his mind with any afterthought.

His glance passed to Charlie Conliffe, and became fixed. He had been below packing his baggage for a hurried departure, when, on the previous night, Charlie had made his drink-inspired comments on Lady Pilth and her jewels, and

therefore the puzzled, fear-stricken expression on the man's face was a mystery to him.

So, too, was the look of horror in Joan Conliffe's eyes. She had risen from her chair, and the accusation was plain in her eyes as she stood looking down, pale-faced, at her husband. The first steadying effect of his draught of "velvet" had worn off, and he trembled with a general vibration like a car whose engine has been left running. His dark-tanned face had gone leaden grey, and he shook his head desperately as though denying to himself a self-accusation.

Garry, the chief steward, appeared on deck.

"The captain is not in his cabin, sir," he said, as he neared Sir Evan Pilth. "He is on the bridge with the officer of the watch. Shall I ask him to come down, sir?"

Sir Evan turned, wild-eyed, and as he did so his glance met that of Charlie Conliffe. The sight of the man who had insulted his wife and himself brought recollection, and with an exclamation of rage he rushed forward to the group by the deck-chairs. Charlie Conliffe's pale eyes were fixed upon him, fascinated.

Joan Conliffe ranged herself by her husband's chair, impelled by that unreasoning and unreasonable loyalty which is the counterpart in women of the sporting instinct in men. A little tremor of admiration ran down Peter Brown's spine as he noted her action. It was momentary, for there was much to absorb his attention.

"My wife's diamonds!" demanded Sir Evan hoarsely. "I accuse you, sir, of the theft. Your own words, uttered in a moment when discretion was at a discount, convict you. Give them back to me, and I am prepared, in view of the lamentable condition to which you were reduced by over-indulgence, to overlook the criminality of the offence, on the assumption that it partook more of the nature of a drunken frolic than a serious attempt at robbery."

A grotesque figure he was as he stood untrussed in the midst of the little group of passengers, laying off his periods with outstretched hand. Words poured from him as freely in his agitated condition as when he was normal, for garrulity had become a second nature to him.

Though he made his accusation boldly, his anxiety to recover the jewels was such that his tone was one of entreaty—of special pleading. He almost begged Charlie Conliffe to return them.

Charlie, for his part, continued to gaze at his accuser as though hypnotised. He swallowed convulsively in abortive efforts to speak, but it was not until his wife appealed to him directly that he succeeded.

"Did you do this, Charlie?" she asked clearly and steadily.

"Of course not, old girl," he replied in a harsh dry voice, but with some confidence.

Then, doubtfully, and with a

bewildered beseeching look upward—

"I didn't, did I?"

"Of course you didn't, old chap," broke in Honiton in his easy friendly manner. "I say, Sir Evan, I'm sure you are mistaken. Conliffe certainly said things last night that he shouldn't have said, and I've no doubt he'll apologise for them, but you have really no evidence that he is a jewel-thief. If suspicion is to fall on every one who has commented on Lady Pilth's diamonds, which of us would escape?"

"That's right, old chap," said Charlie Conliffe with more confidence. "I was as tight as an owl last night—absolutely blithero-blottissimo — I admit it. But if I did pull the old — Lady Pilth's leg about her outfit, that's not to say I went and pinched it afterwards. I don't believe—I mean, of course, I didn't."

"I demand to be searched," broke in Mr Cohun Balke crudely. "I am interested—deeply interested—in diamonds, and suspicion might be turned against me notwithstanding my high reputation in the city."

"You have only just missed the jewels, sir?" asked Honiton.

"Naturally," replied Sir Evan. "It is unlikely that I would permit an unnecessary moment to elapse before attempting to place a matter of this importance in the hands of authority. Indeed, the incomplete nature of my attire, for which I apologise, should be sufficient in itself to testify to my haste."

The arrival of Captain Spedley, accompanied by Garry, pulled the ragged ends of the conversation together. He came forward with the worried look natural to one in whom is vested absolute authority without absolute knowledge.

"I hear you are in trouble, Sir Evan," he said abruptly.

"My wife's diamonds have disappeared, Captain Spedley," replied Sir Evan, who, now that the first shock of the discovery had passed, had recovered much of his cultivated dignity. "And while I make no direct accusation, it is only right that I should add that Mr Conliffe, in the course of some exceedingly insulting remarks which he saw fit to pass last night, actually threatened Lady Pilth with the very disaster that has since occurred."

"Mr Conliffe was drunk last night," said the captain, with a contemptuous glance at Charlie. "He ought to be thoroughly well ashamed of himself; but he was much too drunk to steal diamonds or anything else."

"Then I place the responsibility of discovering the thief upon you, Captain Spedley," declared Sir Evan pompously. "You are in supreme authority, and the diamonds are secreted aboard your ship. I demand that you take instant measures for their recovery."

"I'll be hanged if I accept any responsibility at all," retorted the captain. "I did my

best to get you to hand over your valuables to my care, but you preferred to take the risk. Of course I'll do my best to find the thief, but I want to make it clear right away that I think the whole affair is entirely your own fault. Was the jewel-case broken open?"

Sir Evan was on the point of an outburst of protest against the captain's point of view, but his anxiety for the recovery of the jewels restrained him.

"No, the jewel-case is intact," he replied. "It was only when I opened it just now at Lady Pilth's request that we discovered our loss. The diamonds that she wore last night were gone."

"Did you put them away last night?" demanded Captain Spedley.

Sir Evan hesitated.

"In any ordinary circumstances I would answer in the affirmative with the utmost assurance," he replied. "But the—ah—the events of last night were of such an agitating character, both to Lady Pilth and myself, that it is within the bounds of possibility that we departed in some measure from our customary routine."

"In other words, you forgot to lock the diamonds away when you turned in?" pursued the captain.

"No, no, sir; you go too far. I admit the possibility of such an omission, remote as it is from our usual habit; but the admission of a possibility is a very different thing from the asseveration of a fact."

"The fact of the matter is, you don't know what you did with these jewels when Lady Pilth took them off."

"Precisely. Lady Pilth was exceedingly upset by the gross abuse to which she had been subjected, and I myself was agitated in the extreme."

"I take it you have searched the cabin before making this charge?"

"Thoroughly. As you are aware, a ship's cabin does not lend itself to concealment, and it did not take long to convince us that the diamonds were not hidden by chance in any corner of our room."

"It amounts to this, then. These jewels were left lying around for any one to pick up, and some one took advantage of the opportunity and stole them," the captain summed it up.

"Put crudely, that seems to be the fact," admitted Sir Evan against his will.

"Then the bath steward or cabin steward could have lifted them easily. So could any of the passengers in neighbouring cabins. It won't be an easy job to get at the right man."

"It will be necessary, as a preliminary step, to make a complete search of the baggage and the person of every one aboard the ship. If that produces no result——"

"It *will* produce no result, because it won't be done," interrupted Captain Spedley bluntly. "I can't—at least I certainly won't—take the responsibility of bringing the

whole of the passengers and crew under suspicion."

"Then how do you propose to act?" demanded Sir Evan. "I insist on every possible step being taken. The value of the diamonds that have been stolen is over twenty thousand pounds; and if their recovery is hindered by lack of prompt and energetic action on your part, I shall be compelled to take serious action upon arrival at our destination."

"Threats won't help, Sir Evan," replied Captain Spedley quietly. "I shall take all the steps that I think are reasonable, and before any one leaves the ship I shall take care that the whole business is in the hands of the police and clear of mine. Meantime, you'd better come to my cabin and talk it over quietly."

He turned on his heel and walked off towards his cabin, and after a moment's hesitation and a doubtful look at Charlie Conliffe, Sir Evan Pilth followed him.

"I'm going to have a drink, and not before I dashed well want it," declared Charlie, rising shakily from his deck-chair.

He made off towards the smoking-room, where Scrymgeour and Murray were tippling in blissful ignorance of the scene without, and then paused and turned to face his fellow-passengers.

"If the old blighter says it again I'll bash his face in," he declared. "I know I was oiled—absolutely sewed up—and I may have been a bit off-hand with him and the old girl,—in fact, I know I was. I wasn't so bosky that I don't know what I said; and that's why I say that I couldn't have pinched them — not without knowing it. Could I, now?"

He looked round with an air of entreaty in search of support, but as no one answered at once he took the silence as condemnation.

"All right. I'm going to have one," he declared defiantly and hurried off to the smoking-room.

CHAPTER XII.

The sight of kindred spirits staring stolidly into glasses of whisky and water—Scrymgeour and Murray looked with contempt upon soda — cheered Charlie Conliffe immensely. He was a different man in a bar. He commanded his surroundings, instead of being subject to them.

Simultaneously he pressed the button of the electric bell and murmured the conventional phrase—

"What you gona have, boys?"

In unison the Scotsmen answered—

"Whisky plain, an' thank ye kindly."

The smoke-room steward, alive to his own interests,

attended to his duty with alacrity.

"Guid health t'ye," said Murray and Scrymgeour in a punctilious duet.

"Cheerio," replied the founder of the feast.

It took two hands to convey the "double"—all but neat—whisky from the glass to Charlie's livid lips.

"I *wanted* that," he declared with a sigh, as he set down the empty glass.

The other two men were content with a lingering sip.

"Ye're gye extravagant wi' the whusky," said Scrymgeour, with a shrewd glance from the empty glass to Charlie. He could not fail to note the effects of the previous night's debauch, for not only did Charlie's hands and lips tremble, but even his cheeks suffered from an uncontrollable, blancmange-like vibration which it was irksome to look at.

"Me an' Murray canna keep up wi' ye if ye gang gulpin' it doon like that."

"That's all right, old chap. It was the first to-day—and I wanted it," replied Charlie, ignoring his draught of champagne and stout, the effect of which had already evaporated. "If you'd seen me getting it in the neck from old Pilth out there, you'd know I wanted it. The old blighter charged me with pinching his missus's diamonds!"

"An' did ye no'?" asked Murray without a shadow of expression.

It was one of Charlie Conliffe's troubles in his association with these two cronies that he could never be sure whether they were exceptionally stupid, or whether they indulged a peculiar funereal humour only interpretable by a brother Scot. He looked suspiciously at Murray now; but there was nothing about the stolid rugged face to give him a clue to the mystery.

"Of course I didn't," he retorted sharply. "At least, I'm near sure I didn't."

"Then there's a doot?" said Scrymgeour with some show of interest. "Man, that's queer! Ye dinna ken whether ye did or whether ye didna? It mun ha'e been last nicht then, A'm thinkin'."

"It was last night right enough. What did you want to go off and leave me ashore for anyhow? You might have seen the night through with a pal."

"Weel, ye see, it was bedtime," replied Murray apologetically. "An' forby, we had twa-three nips mair nor ordnar', an' it's a gran' thing tae ken when tae stop."

"An', mind ye," Scrymgeour went on, when his friend ceased, "we gied ye a chance tae come back wi' us, but ye were that thrawn ye were nayther tae haud nor tae bind. Sae we juist had tae let ye gang yer ain gait, which, A'm thinkin', maun ha'e been a gye fast yin."

"I admit I went off the deep end and got fairly sewn up. It was a hot enough spot you

left me in. As far as I remember, Honiton found me somehow and brought me back to the ship, and I had a dust-up with old Pilth. I've just got a hazy recollection of threatening to pinch the old girl's jewels—and now they've been pinched sure enough."

"It looks gye black, but there's ae streak o' licht tae be seen. Ye maun ha'e been faur ower fou tae steal onything. Ye were as drunk's a lord afore we left ye tilt."

"I don't like that word 'drunk,'" said Charlie, fidgeting in his seat, somewhat like a child whose wrong-doing has been really brought home to him. "If I had been drunk I wouldn't have got back to the ship. I might have had vine leaves in my hair by the time you cleared off, but even when I came aboard my back teeth weren't awash."

"Ye may ca' it what ye like," said Murray dryly. "But if Scrymgeour or me had been in your condeetion, we wud ha'e been juist plain drunk—deid drunk."

"It isn't done, old boy. The best people don't say it," protested Charlie. "If a man gets properly slithered, you might call him blind, blotto and bewildered, or pie-eyed and paralytic, or even sucked under and soaked. There's plenty of useful words without using the one you used."

"Drunk's guid eneuch for the likes o' us," said Murray dogmatically. "Or when we want to be unco genteel—gye fou. A man's either drunk or sober—there's nae gettin' awa' frae that."

"You're wrong there, anyhow," retorted Charlie. "You can't say a man's drunk when he's just lit up or even fairly fresh. When he has one or two more he may get oiled a bit; but even when he begins to be muzzy he's only about fifty-fifty, and that's only half-way to having a skinful. If he keeps on he'll get corrugated in the back legs, and show signs of being scuppered; but even then he's far from speechless, and a man may be speechless, and yet not quite paid to the wide. Mind you, I'm not saying I wasn't thoroughly sloshed last night, but even then I was sober in parts."

"Maybe it was yin o' the pairts ye were sober in that thieved the auld wife's braws," suggested Murray, with that air of stolid stupidity that puzzled Charlie Conliffe so much.

"Or maybe ye walkit in yer sleep, bein' sae fou, or, raythor, bein' sae upliftit wi' the speerit," added Scrymgeour.

"That's a new one," exclaimed Charlie with a gleam of his long white teeth. "I must remember that. But it's all rot about me doing it, I tell you. When I get thoroughly drenched I sleep like a log. You ask my wife if I don't. Here comes Honiton. He's a sport, and he'll tell you I didn't do it. Have a drink, Honiton, old bean?"

The usual friendly smile was,

for once, missing from Honiton's face. He looked worried, and his face did not brighten at Conliffe's greeting.

"What's it to be, old bean?" repeated Charlie.

Honiton sat down heavily in a corner of the red plush upholstered lounge. At Conliffe's second invitation he looked up savagely.

"I'm fed up with you, Conliffe," he said bluntly. "And I won't drink with you. Steward, bring me a whisky-and-soda."

"What's the matter?" Charlie exclaimed blankly. He did not realise that any of his amiable weaknesses could affect his popularity.

"If you want to know," went on Honiton coldly, "you're a filthy kind of a beast. If I raked you off the dunghill last night and brought you back, God knows it wasn't for your sake. As it has turned out, it would have been better if I had left you to rot."

He paused, and hastily gulped down the whisky that the steward had brought him. Then he went on, while Charlie Conliffe stood looking at him in dumfounded astonishment.

"There are some men who can get drunk and remain gentlemen. You're not one of them. You're a swine when you're drunk, and you're seldom anything else. Worse than that—you're a fool. If your brain hadn't been sodden, you'd have known you would be suspected. The only gleam of intelligence you showed was in getting away with the swag; and how you managed that—in your condition—I'm hanged if I can make out."

"But I didn't, I tell you. So help me God, I didn't. I don't remember a thing except fighting on the stairs. It's all a blank after that. I must have slept like a log."

Charlie was so overwhelmed with the accusation that he forgot to be angered at the insults that had been slung at him.

"You said yourself I couldn't have done it," he went on beseechingly, almost tearfully.

"Bah! What *could* I say with your unfortunate wife standing by, looking like death? Hadn't you done her enough harm before without springing this on her?"

"I can't stick it," cried Conliffe, twisting as though in physical pain. He pressed the button of the bell, seeking relief in the only possible direction. "I know I'm not all I might be, but you've no right to rub it in. What business is it of yours anyhow? A double whisky, and don't be too free with the soda, steward."

As the door closed behind the attendant, Honiton laughed harshly.

"What business is it of mine? Good Lord, do you think you're the only one that may be suspected? You've put me in the rottenest hole——"

In his excitement he had

said more than he intended. With a sudden effort he recovered his self-control.

"You fool," he went on more calmly, "don't you see that until the thief is found we are all more or less under suspicion. Murray, Scrymgeour, Brown—all of us—have good reason to curse you."

The steward re-entered, and Honiton was silenced. Charlie Conliffe seized the glass eagerly, and swallowed the bulk of its contents at a draught. Again he needed it.

"You may as well be getting me another. This won't last long," he added, looking ruefully at the meagre drain that remained.

When the door closed, he turned again to Honiton.

"Look here, old chap," he said, and his manner was conciliating, "I don't blame you for anything you've said. I'd have said it all myself if things had been the other way round. But you're wrong. I'm nearly sure you're wrong; and if I did do it, I'm innocent just the same, because I dunno anything about it."

His tongue was loosening, slurring over the words, so that they followed one another in a kind of oily flow. His trembling had ceased, and a false light had come into his pale eyes. He felt a man again.

"Be a sport, Honiton. Let's settle the thing once for all. If I took 'em, I must have hidden them in my cabin. Let's go and look. I don't mind owning up if we find 'em. Make a joke out of it—see?"

Honiton laughed his mirthless laugh again.

"There's no harm in looking, but if we find nothing it will prove nothing," he said. "You may have hidden them anywhere—chucked them into the Mediterranean as like as not. You were mad enough for that."

Charlie Conliffe groaned. Then his face lightened, and he laughed.

"If I did, I'm safe. They can never prove it on me. Where's that steward? I want that other drink, an' then we'll have a hunt round. You'll have one, Honiton?"

"I tell you I won't drink with you," replied Honiton bluntly. "If I cared a tuppeny tinker's damn about you, I'd tell you that you've had all that's good for you already, but you're not worth it. God forbid that I should ever be mixed up in your affairs again."

"This'll just put me right," said Charlie with a sickly air of bravado, taking the fresh drink from the steward's tray. "I'm all right, boys, ain't I?" he added, appealing to the two Scotsmen, who had listened silently, their shrewd eyes darting from Conliffe to Honiton and back again throughout the dialogue between the two others.

"Ye'll be nane the better for that yin," said Murray, taking a well-charred briar from his mouth slowly. "I canna say what length ye've got doon

that list o' yours, but ye're no' juist stane-cauld sober."

"If ye'd be content wi' nips instead o' glasses ye wudna break up sae quick, an' it wudna cost ye sae muckle forby. Ye're fair drinkin' siller, laddie," Scrymgeour contributed, with the air of a father.

"I dunno what half of it means," retorted Charlie. "But you can't come the water-waggon over me. You can stow it away good and strong—both of you."

"Aye, that's juist it," said Scrymgeour with a twinkling eye. "We can baith stow it away a' richt, but you canna."

"Ye'd be weel advised tae leave it alane," added Murray.

Honiton sat disgustedly in his corner. Charlie turned to him again.

"They can say what they like; I like it, and I'm gonna have it when I want it. Come on, Honiton, le's look for the old girl's diamonds. Min' you, I don't admit I took 'em, but le's have a look."

A slight uncertainty in the legs and an increased oily slur in the speech testified to the effect of the last drink.

"Come, then," agreed Honiton, rising abruptly. "You're better doing that than gulping down whiskies at this pace."

"You coming, boys?" asked Charlie, turning again to his Scots cronies. "Come and be witnesses. I want all the witnesses I can get. I want t' prove I'm a liar—what I mean to say, I'm *not* a liar."

"Na, na, ye'll no draig us intilt," said Murray cautiously, and Scrymgeour only shook his head.

"Come on then, Honiton; we'll find 'em ourselves. Bet you five bob we find 'em first go. *Sure* to find 'em."

Honiton looked at him with contempt, and led the way from the smoking-room.

Together they turned Conliffe's cabin upside down in the vain search. Charlie insisted that every possible hiding-place should be overhauled, even to the opening of his wife's cabin-trunk and shaking out of her under-linen. Honiton stood by, hard-faced and keen-eyed.

Charlie, his attitude to the search having gradually altered as the whisky mounted to his head, became exasperated at its failure.

"Damme, they must be somewhere!" he exclaimed angrily. "Where the devil can they be?"

The cabin began to look as though a cyclone had struck it. The bed-clothes were torn from the bunks, and the contents of the cabin-trunks strewn on top indiscriminately. As Charlie grew increasingly excited he flung things from him recklessly, and then attacked the disordered heap upon the floor, rooting it like a hog.

The opening of his trunk had disclosed a half-filled bottle of whisky, and the "jolt" to which he treated himself worked him up to a frenzy. But for Honiton's restraining influence, he would have torn the mat-

tresses apart and disembowelled the pillows.

Finally, exhausted by the violence of his exertions, he sat down amidst the wreck that he had made and wept maudlin tears.

"They're gone," he stammered. "Clean gone—not a veshtish left. What we gonna do 'bout it, Honiton, old chap?"

With a gesture of disgust, Honiton left him and went on deck.

CHAPTER XIII.

When Charlie Conliffe, having been accused by Sir Evan Pilth, went off to the smoking-room to revive himself with stimulants, the remainder of the passengers broke up into embarrassed but intrigued groups.

The Honourable Stephen Corris whispered eagerly with the Cohun Balkes; he, delighted with an incident that promised him the excitement for which he craved—they, genuinely upset by the loss of such magnificent jewels.

Joan Conliffe, white and pitiable, sat silent and immobile for some minutes, then with a long audible breath as though struggling for air, rose abruptly.

"Come," she said in a low confidential voice to Peter Brown, "let us walk."

They moved off together forward.

Mrs Upton had already slipped away to her cabin, embarrassed as much by such an open scandal as though she had been surprised in her bath.

Honiton was left alone with Jocelyn Upton. It was the first time the girl had been up against a serious proposition in practice; in theory, she was prepared, with the dogmatism of youth, for every eventuality. At first her mind lost its orientation, and she sat silent, the scene of the past few minutes mingling in her mind with that of the previous evening like two exposures on the same film. She sat silent until she had sorted the doings of the past twenty-four hours into their proper sequence.

Then she turned to her companion, who had meantime been watching intently the expressions that passed across her pretty face.

"What do you think, Frank? Did that horrible man do it?"

Honiton shrugged his shoulders.

"Who knows! He was mad enough last night, and if he had the opportunity—— But what does it matter to us, Jo? Let the Pilths and the Conliffes worry over their own troubles. We have little enough time to be happy in."

The last remark he threw out diffidently, watching carefully to see how the girl would take it.

"It *does* matter to us," she said dogmatically. "How can any of us be comfortable, to say nothing of being happy, when there is a *thief* on the

ship? If Mr Conliffe didn't steal the diamonds, some one else did. One may be talking to the thief and never know it. It's horrible!"

Honiton looked at her with an inscrutable face. It seemed, for a time, that he had nothing to say.

"The mere idea of talking to a thief horrifies you, then?" he said at last, curiously.

"Makes me shudder, Frank," she said earnestly. "I have always had a loathing for *wicked* people, but this is the first time I have ever come in contact with one. I shan't be able to rest until I know for certain who is guilty. I shall be quaking all the time for fear that I am talking to the thief."

Again Frank Honiton was slow in replying—he of the ready tongue and the quick retort.

"If you feel as strongly as that, one would think that you would be able to tell by instinct when you met with any one really bad," he said, his straight eyes intent upon her face.

"I don't think so," Jocelyn replied reflectively. "Of course one has likes and dislikes at first sight, and one can be quite sure of some people; but even if one is certain that they are horrid, it doesn't follow that they are really wicked. It is easier with really nice people. One can't be wrong about them. One has only to look at your old face, for instance, to *know* that you are all right."

She smiled a jolly friendly smile as her wide eyes turned to Honiton's, and pressed a soft hand on the freckled one which grasped the arm of the chair in which he sat.

Honiton gazed at her, motionless as a man stricken with paralysis. So she *knew* that he was all right. Good God!

A musical tinkle of laughter from Jocelyn roused him. She had taken his strange attitude and expression for a piece of his customary fooling.

"Don't take it to heart, old boy. Pull yourself together," she said laughingly, shaking him by the arm meanwhile. "Have you never had a certificate of character before?"

Honiton recovered his self-control with an effort, and having done so, furthered the impression that Jocelyn had formed. His merry laugh was whole-hearted enough to have deceived a much more suspicious auditor than the girl, and his bantering tone could not have been improved upon.

"You must put it in writing and sign it, Jo," he exclaimed. "I may never have the chance of such a reference again, and it might be very useful to me in my next place."

If he thought at all of where his "next place" was to be, he concealed the thought to perfection.

"There's no need to write it, Frank. You carry your certificate of merit on your face. Just as plainly, one can read the certificate of demerit on Mr Conliffe's face, but that does not prove he stole Lady Pilth's jewels. It only means

that he is a nasty person, to be avoided. Who else *could* have stolen the jewels, Frank?"

"Any one might have. How can I be sure that you didn't do it yourself?" replied Honiton lightly. "We are all under suspicion, notwithstanding our certificates of merit. If Conliffe is guilty, he did it out of devilment, and not for the value of the swag, I should say. It's quite on the cards, however, that one of the stewards may be the thief. What does instinct tell you about Garry, for instance?"

"It's not fair, Frank," Jocelyn protested. "He's a horrid man. He always makes me think of some kind of reptile, but it seems so mean to suspect people of a terrible crime like this just because one dislikes them."

"What about Balke, then? He's keen enough about diamonds."

"I don't like him either. There you are, you see. You are forcing me to suspect people. I shan't be able to look any one in the face for fear that they see my suspicion in my eyes."

"Let's forget the whole miserable business, then, and talk about something pleasant—yourself, for example," said Honiton.

Jocelyn shook her head prettily.

"I can't do it," she said. "This thing looms up and hides everything else in a fog. I can't forget for a moment that there's a thief aboard the ship, and that it may be any one. It's dreadful."

"I wonder why you have such an exaggerated horror of theft?" said Honiton, looking at the girl with inscrutable eyes.

"Exaggerated! Why do you call it that? I'm sure you have as great a disgust as I have for anything so mean as a thief. It's the meanness more than the actual wickedness that I hate. I can imagine circumstances in which I could sympathise with a murderer. Killing a person is not necessarily a mean thing to do, even if it's wicked, but thieving is both. You see what I mean?"

Honiton nodded silently.

"But don't you think I'm right?" insisted Jocelyn, so enthusiastic over her idea that she longed for her companion's confirmation.

"Of course you're right, Jo," he said with an effort, which she was too intent on her own thoughts to notice.

She left him soon after that to look for her mother, and it was then that Honiton joined Charlie Conliffe in the smoking-room. It may be that his attitude towards the latter was influenced by the earlier interview, that the savagery of the attack was the natural reaction from the severe repression that he had undergone. . . .

Peter Brown had meanwhile endured an ordeal all his own. At first he walked by Joan Conliffe's side, nursing to his heart the glad fact that again it was to him she turned for

sympathy in her trouble. So absorbed was he in this thought that there was no room in his mind for the trouble itself, and they had trod the deck together in silence several times before Joan Conliffe's voice recalled him to the actualities of the situation.

They were on the fo'c'sle-deck, in the very peak of the bow, when she stopped before him and leaned her back against the rail.

"Have you nothing to say to me?" she demanded, her wide-set melancholy eyes looking straightly into his.

Peter Brown returned abruptly — shamefacedly — to earth. His eyes fell before hers, and the remorse he felt for his momentary self-absorption was worthy of a far greater crime.

"I—I did not like to intrude upon your thoughts," he stammered, his eyes upon the deck, for he could not look her in the face and lie. He could not tell her he had been gloating over her misery (he had exaggerated his momentary lapse to that), yet to be anything but perfectly straight with her made him supremely uncomfortable.

"Surely you could not think them such happy ones that they would not bear breaking in upon!" she answered bitterly.

"One would have more fear of jarring upon sad thoughts than happy ones."

"Sad! There is some—decency and dignity about sadness, but there is nothing of either left to me—only a shameful misery."

She spoke in a low expressionless voice—the voice of one who had abandoned hope of better things to come.

"You must not say that. However shameful the cause of your trouble may be, it does not lessen *your* dignity," said Peter, looking her in the face once more, now that he was speaking from his heart. "You have done nothing to reproach yourself with."

"Have I not? What do you know of me? If I had been a better wife, might I not have stopped him in time, instead of going my own way and leaving him to his? I might have kept in touch with him and saved him from drink. Then this would not have happened."

"You take it for granted, then, that your husband is guilty of this theft?" asked Peter Brown diffidently.

"What else can I think—after last night? He could not even deny it just now."

"What, exactly, happened last night?" asked Peter. "I wasn't on deck when he got back."

"No, that surprised me," said Joan quickly. "You left us very suddenly when we got back to the ship. Where did you go?"

The detective could not tell her that he had gone to pack preliminary to the extinguishment of his official career. He rubbed his lean cheek with his

thin nervous fingers, and hesitated.

"I was tired after the long day," he said, avoiding her eyes. "I went straight off to my berth."

"Yet when you came so kindly to help me, a good time afterwards, you were fully dressed," Mrs Conliffe insisted.

"Of course. When Honiton joined me and told me something of—of what had occurred, I—I *had* to come to you. He did not tell me, however, anything about this business of the diamonds."

Joan looked at him doubtfully. She could tell by his manner that he had not been quite open with her, and it surprised her, for she could not see why he should deceive her. The point seemed so insignificant, however, that she carried her cross-examination no further, but gave him an account of her husband's behaviour to Lady Pilth on the previous night.

"It isn't the first time he has made such threats," she concluded. "But I never took him seriously. He says so many wild things when he is drunk."

A shudder of distaste shook her at the word, and Peter Brown, watching her every movement, felt an intense pity as he pictured all that shudder implied.

"No one would take him seriously," he answered at once —"least of all himself. But some one might easily take advantage of the threats that he had made so openly, some one who already had an eye on the diamonds, and chose the opportune moment when suspicion would be sure to rest on your husband."

He said it without much thought or conviction; but even as he spoke he saw how his words would apply to his prisoner, Honiton. Yet he had already convinced himself that that theory was absurd. Honiton could have no motive for the theft—and besides, the words Peter had just spoken would apply equally well to any one who had resolved upon an attempt on the jewels.

"Then you really think Charlie didn't do it?" said Joan Conliffe, her earnest eyes fixed inquiringly on Peter.

"I think it very unlikely. Even if he did, it could only have been in a drunken frolic, and he would have returned the diamonds when he was sober. I've never known a case where——"

The detective stopped abruptly. He had nearly disclosed his profession and broken his pact with Honiton.

"Yes?"

Joan Conliffe leaned towards him with interest. His belief in her husband's innocence roused her from the intensity of her misery.

"Yes?" she repeated impatiently, as he made no effort to continue.

"I do not remember what I was going to say," declared the detective, looking over the

rail down into the rush of white water cut by the ship's bow.

"That's strange," said she in a bewildered tone. "You said you had never known a case where—what?"

The detective cursed his stupidity, and the mad compact that had fated him to deceive the one woman of all others with whom he longed to be open.

"I can't quite remember," he said desperately. "I think I must have meant to say that I had never read of a case where any one took to crime suddenly like that."

He felt the weakness of his answer, and knew that she must guess that it was not the truth. In his heart he cursed Honiton and the day that he had met him. He had a momentary mad temptation to tell her plainly who and what he was; but a sudden vision of Honiton returning from Valetta to the ship choked the words back into his throat. If the prisoner could play the game, his captor could not do less.

Joan Conliffe watched him as he leant over the rail, twisting his long flexible fingers uncomfortably, with a look of surprise and disappointment on her face. He had kept something back. She knew it, and it saddened her. In the few days that they had passed together she had grown to feel more and more intimate with this quiet shy man, and she already had for him an affection the strength of which she was herself unconscious of.

Suddenly she leant towards him and placed her hand upon his arm.

"Won't you tell me what you really meant to say?" she asked quietly, her earnest eyes, half-sad, half-reproachful, bent on him.

He could not lie to her—not with the thrill of her touch on his arm, and her eyes asking so plainly for truth alone.

He turned to her from the sea, and straightened his long lank form.

"I'm sorry—I can't," he said harshly and abruptly, though he meant to be gentle and apologetic.

Joan Conliffe looked at him, perplexed and disappointed. Then, with a sigh, she turned and gazed out over the sea. Peter Brown, in the misery of his dilemma, watched her furtively. He saw that her beautiful eyes were glistening, and that the sad droop of her sweet lips was accentuated. She made a lovely but pitiful figure as she leant on the rail, looking out on a desolation of grey water that seemed as void and sunless as her own future.

What could he say or do that would clear the misunderstanding that had arisen? Nothing—without breaking his compact with Honiton. Yet if he did not break that compact, he was doomed to forfeit the sweet intimacy that had arisen so naturally between this lovable woman and himself.

The memory of Honiton re-

turning from Valetta forced him to a decision. He looked at her again, his eyes hungry for affection, and then turned and made his way aft, his shoulders drooped, his loose ramshackle frame vivid with misery.

CHAPTER XIV.

Joan Conliffe was hardly conscious of his departure. His refusal to complete what he had begun to say—the fact that there was something that he felt he must hold back from her—troubled her more than she would have believed. She had a sudden revelation of the depth of her feeling for him, and the discovery astounded her. The time had been so short for it to have grown to such a powerful plant. She did not realise that her heart had lain so long fallow that it was just in condition to germinate and nourish any seed that might drift, by chance, into its depths.

She was horrified by her discovery, and a little frightened. Never before during her married life had she been conscious of an attraction towards any man strong enough to make her feel guilty in the eyes of her husband, and the sensation appalled her. It made her feel unclean.

In a panic of contrition she forced her thoughts away from Peter Brown, and focussed them upon her husband and his predicament. Was it possible that he could have been guilty of this theft, yet be unconscious of it? She remembered many occasions upon which he had been more than hazy in his recollection of the previous evening's happenings. It might be that under the impulsion of drink he had actually stolen the diamonds, hidden them, and forgotten the incident completely. If so, what could he have done with them?

The answer drove her from the fo'c'sle-deck aft. She hurried to her cabin, and arrived shortly after Honiton had left Charlie Conliffe to his own devices, which latter consisted of fortifying himself with another drink from his private reservoir. When his wife entered, he was seated in the middle of the disorder that he had occasioned, a partially emptied glass in his hand, and a glazed, stupefied look in his curious light eyes.

"Charlie! Whatever are you doing?" Joan Conliffe exclaimed at sight of the wreckage by which he was surrounded.

Her husband hiccoughed audibly, and scowled at her.

"What you done with 'em?" he demanded.

"Done with what? What are you doing there, and why have you thrown my clothes all over the place?"

Her gorge rose against him violently. The sight of her most intimate belongings—in

which she was peculiarly dainty and fastidious—strewn grossly upon the floor, disordered and sullied, turned her whole being against him.

Meanwhile Charlie essayed an answer to her questions.

"I tell you I've looked everywhere. I know w'ere I left 'em essackly, but you've tidied 'em away. You're always tidying away!"

His muddled mind had veered round completely. Starting out upon the search to prove his own innocence, he had become obsessed with the idea of finding the jewels, and alcohol left no room in his mind for any other idea.

"Then you did take them?" exclaimed his wife, her eyes opening wide with horror.

Charlie looked at her stupidly. He had forgotten the earlier stages of the affair, and her words brought back a hazy recollection of them.

"Wot you mean?" he cried angrily, scrambling to his feet, and slopping the remains of his drink over the raiment on the floor. "D'ye mean to say you 'cuse your own husband? Ought to be 'shamed of y'rself!"

His maudlin condition revolted her. She was upon the point of a violent outburst of recrimination, when the memory of her own words to Peter Brown chilled the hot words upon her lips. In how far was she herself responsible for his degradation? Had she been the companion to him that she ought to have been? Might not her influence, wisely exerted, have saved him from the ruin into which he had fallen?

She had a quick revulsion of feeling. Her self-condemnation brought with it an exaggerated compassion for her husband. For the moment she looked upon him as the unfortunate victim of her own neglect—a neglect which existed almost entirely in her imagination, for she had always been ready to be his companion had he been willing to share his life with her.

Her new-born compassion reflected itself upon her face. Her wide eyes softened, and she looked at Charlie as a mother at a child spoilt by her own over-indulgence.

He, clinging to the edge of the upper berth, rocked erratically to the motion of the ship, and scowled at his wife. He was puzzling, in a disconnected fashion, over his inability to find what he was looking for, and trying to reconcile his disappointment with his disclaimer of the theft. His inability to straighten out the tangle roused his temper.

"What d'you mean by it?" he demanded viciously.

"You'd better lie down, Charlie," said Joan, ignoring both words and tone. "You know you'll feel better after an hour's sleep, and I can tidy all these things away while you're resting."

"You want to find 'em yourself," retorted Charlie, with blazing eyes. "But you shan't.

I gotta find 'em an' give 'em back to the ol' girl. Say it wasalla joke. See? No harm done. No 'ntention of pinching the things. Jus' a li'l joke on 'er. See?"

Joan was puzzled. She had not watched the growth of this idea in her husband's mind as Honiton had, and she could not but think it had some foundation in fact.

"Where did you hide them?" she asked, watching to see how he would take the question.

"If I knew that I'd 've found 'em, you fool," he retorted. "P'raps they're here —p'raps they're in the Med —Med — hic — erranean," he added, with a vague recollection of Honiton's suggestion.

"Then you *did* take them!" exclaimed Joan, convinced and aghast at her conviction.

But this touched upon the other and contradictory idea in her husband's jangled mind. He was up in arms at once.

"What you mean t' 'nsinuate?" he demanded angrily. "I never touched 'em, I tell you. You oughto know that. You'd have seen me go if I'd lef' the cabin."

A puzzled look crossed his face again, as he tried to bring his memory into play.

"W'ere were you, anyhow?" he demanded suddenly. "I don't remember seein' you w'en I got back, 'n' you weren't here 's morning w'en I woke up. W'ere were you all night?"

His dark face grew purplish with suffused blood as his suspicion awoke, and he made a step forward, only to lurch against the partition and stagger back to the support of the bunk.

"How could I share the cabin with you in the state you were in, and after the company I had seen you with at Malta?" asked his wife, quietly and steadily. "Mr Brown kindly found me a spare cabin, and I moved into it," she added injudiciously.

"Brown!" exclaimed Charlie. "Wot's he got to do with it? If I thought you were carrying on with him I'd tear your liver out. Come t' think of it, you're for ever hangin' around with him. W'ere was he las' night? Tell me that, or, by God, I'll strangle you!"

"Charlie! How dare you suggest such a thing! Oh, it's too horrible! You don't believe it, Charlie, surely?"

She stretched her hands towards him beseechingly, horrified by his suspicion. Her husband looked at her sullenly.

"Anyhow, you should have been here," he said, ignoring her appeal. "See wot you've done! You've lef' me without a witness. If you'd been here, you coulda sworn I never lef' my bunk. See wot you've le' me in for—sneakin' off like that."

Then his previous suspicion boiled up again in his excited brain.

"But that's the leas' part of it," he snarled at her. "You go off 'n' sleep in 'nother man's cabin, 'n'——"

The ebullition of jealousy

amounted to madness. Before Joan could raise her hands to protect herself, he had lurched across the floor and seized her by the throat. His bulging eyes and gleaming teeth were within a few inches of her face, and she saw that he meant to kill her.

She screamed once in her terror before his fingers compressed her throat to silence. She tried to tear his hands from her neck, but without success. In an ecstasy of rage Charlie battered her head against the door to which he had pinned her, cursing her and dishonouring her with every foul name that his gutter vocabulary could suggest.

Fortunately her scream had been heard, or the murderous attack would have been successful. Peter Brown had gone below, sad-hearted, to meditate on his dilemma in solitude. The sound of a woman's scream brought him in an instant to his cabin door. He was guided to the scene by the persistent and suggestive hammering, and he burst into the Conliffes' cabin no more than in time.

The door opened inward, and it was all that he could do to force an entrance. Charlie Conliffe released his grip on his wife's throat, and tried to prevent the entrance of the intruder. His wife slipped in a heap to the floor, overcome by the bitterness of her ordeal. Brown had to exert his utmost strength to prise the door open sufficiently to force his way inside.

He took in the situation at a glance, and with a single blow sent Conliffe reeling across the floor, to collapse upon the plush settee under the port-hole. Then he bent over Joan, who was not unconscious, but lay sobbing convulsively where she had fallen. He raised her gently, so that her shoulders rested upon his knee and her dark head was supported by his arm. The situation was embarrassing—more so than he knew.

He held her so, waiting for her to recover; and as he waited, he glanced across at Conliffe, uncertain how he might take this interruption. But he saw that there was nothing more to be feared. Charlie was dazed, if not to some extent sobered, by the blow he had received. He lay back upon the lounge, looking with half-uncomprehending eyes at the scene before him. Indeed, even as Conliffe watched him, his eyes gradually closed, and his heavy breathing announced that he had fallen into a drunken sleep.

Peter turned his attention again to Mrs Conliffe. A wild rage rose within him at sight of the livid marks upon her white throat, and it was perhaps lucky for Charlie that he had ceased for the time to be an object worthy of attack.

Joan's sobs gradually grew less violent and hysterical. She drew in the restoring air in deep sighs to her wide bosom, and her face began to wear a more natural colour and ex-

pression. Peter Brown passed his hand gently across her soft hair in a gesture meant to be soothing — no more — as one might comfort a hurt child. It had not the effect he intended. She started from him and struggled to her feet, a fresh horror on her face. Innocent of any wrong, Peter looked at her in surprise as she confronted him with heaving breast. How could he know that the agony she had passed through had been on his account, and that her recent discovery of her own feelings had lent sufficient colour to her husband's accusations to leave her with an uneasy sense of guilt?

"You feel better?" he asked.

She nodded, waving him farther away from her, and swallowing convulsively.

"Then you must come away from here," he went on, speaking with an air of decision. "You can go back to the cabin you had last night."

"No, no!" she cried quickly, a look upon her face that he could not understand.

"You must. You can't stay here—with him."

"Go away. Leave me. I am quite all right now, and—and I thank you very much for coming to my assistance. It wasn't necessary really, but you couldn't know that. Charlie is often—boisterous when he has had drink, and—he hurts more than he knows. I cried out before I thought what I was doing."

She spoke rapidly and uncertainly, and as she concluded, opened the door and held it for Peter Brown.

He took the handle from her and closed it again.

"Mrs Conliffe," he began, and his set face showed his determination to go through with what he had to say, "you need not be afraid to trust me—indeed, you must trust me. The sounds I heard from outside and the marks I can see even now on your throat are enough to prove that it was no mere boisterousness. You *can't* stay here. The man is no longer responsible for what he does."

Joan Conliffe listened, her eyes turned to the ground, nor did she raise them as she answered—

"I *will* stay. He needs me to look after him."

"Your life is not safe," the detective insisted. "I can't take the responsibility of leaving you alone with him. If you won't act on my advice, I must report the whole affair to the captain."

"Oh, no, no! You mustn't do that," she cried, and in her anxiety she took his thin arm in both her hands. "Really I am quite safe. You don't know him as I do. When he wakes up he will have quite recovered. Probably he will have forgotten all about it. Don't bring him into any worse repute than he is in already. I can't bear it."

"What was the cause of it, anyhow?" asked Peter, wavering as he had wavered that night in Cairo.

How could she tell him?

But women are quicker and more natural in deception than men, and he never doubted her answer.

"He was angry because he thought that I believed he had stolen Lady Pilth's diamonds," she said. "Please go. I want to be alone."

In the face of her desire so plainly put there was nothing for Peter Brown to do but leave her. He saw that she was quite determined to stay with her husband, brute though he was, and he could not bring himself to put her story before the captain against her own wish, so once again he was forced to shoulder a responsibility that went against his will.

Joan Conliffe, left alone with her homicidal husband, crouched on the floor sobbing and shivering with the reaction. At last, with an effort, she regained her self-control. Dully, almost automatically, she rose. She adjusted her sleeping husband more comfortably upon the couch, placed a cushion behind his head, and looked round upon the disorder of the room. Almost gladly she busied herself with the task of getting it to its normal condition.

(To be continued.)

ON JUNGLE TRAILS IN CEYLON.

"MAK! Mak! Pita! Wijja —Ha-a-ak!" It is almost impossible to transliterate the noises made by the bullock-drivers as, perched on the poles of their carts, they urged the panting, swaying bullocks through the sticky mud of the so-called jungle "road." It was early in January, after the N.E. Monsoon rains had filled the tanks which now spilled across our track, and made travelling in this part of the district very difficult. I was out on a tour with the district Revenue Officer, and a hard time we had of it to get our baggage-carts along. We pushed, and shouted encouragement to the bullocks, as the carts sank axle-deep into the mud, while the monkeys overhead in the trees gibbered at us and mocked our efforts.

We had started out with a modest retinue, consisting of a boy, a cook, a peon, and two baggage-carts. As we were travelling through a little-known district where white men seldom go, and even the Revenue Officer visits only occasionally, the dwellers in the scattered villages through which we passed took considerable interest in us, and by the time we had been three days on the march our "tail" had increased by the addition of a dhoby, a milk-boy with two cows, two trackers, and a game-watcher, together with a small boy I found in camp early one morning, who, on being asked what he was doing, said that Master's cook had engaged him to catch prawns for Master's curry. I suggested that if we went on at this rate we should soon have the entire jungle population at our heels; but the Revenue Officer, who has a weakness for prawn curry, refused to interfere. He said that we had a large supply of rice, and that with our rifles and guns, even such a bad shot as myself ought to be able to find food for our "servants" in the wild parts to which we were bound. (The R.O. is apt to put things in an unnecessarily unpleasant way in the early morning; I am not a good shot, never pretended to be—but still——) However, to return to our journey.

After four hours' very severe struggling, the carts were pushed and hauled on to higher ground, where the "going" was a bit better. The R.O. and myself were splashed with mud; but the carts could now be left to themselves, so we walked on ahead to the R.O.'s "circuit bungalow," where we were to have our midday breakfast. We had to wait some time before the carts arrived, and a heavy thunderstorm had come up before they reached the (com-

parative) shelter of the bungalow compound.

Eventually we sat down to breakfast at about 2 P.M. The meal was a composite one, beginning with delicious omelette, and progressing through snipe cooked to a turn and the above-mentioned prawn curry, to wind up with toast and nutmeg jelly.

In the middle of it, in walked quite unexpectedly the Policeman, accompanied by a Planter, who had come on a shooting trip. The Planter said he had meant to write to the R.O.—in fact, he thought that he had written—to say that he was coming, and having heard at district headquarters that the R.O. had left, he started in pursuit, knowing that if he "travelled light," with luck he should be able to overtake us.

"By travelling light, I suppose you mean that I shall have to rig you out with clothes," commented the R.O.

"Well, I had to bring a gun and rifle and cartridges, and I could not carry anything more."

"Anyhow, you are a better shot than B——" (meaning me), "so perhaps I can find clothes for you, if you keep the pot boiling while I do my work."

"We all know what the R.O.'s work is," said the Planter with a twinkle in his eye, "when he gets well into his beloved jungles——"

"Of course you fellows can have your laugh," said the R.O., "but I always maintain that the best way to get to know the jungle man is by going out shooting and fishing with him. You meet him as man to man, and he talks naturally to you. If you get him up before you, even for a very informal palaver, and are surrounded by clerks, interpreters, and such gentlemen, you never get at him. I always say: Go among the people yourself, and a gun and rod will be a far better introduction than an interpreter——"

"Now he's off on his hobby!" jeered the Planter. "Why you can't call your 'Tours of Inspection' shooting-trips, as honestly they should be called, I don't know."

Pipes and cheroots by this time had been lighted. The storm still continued. The company, after the heavy meal, was inclined to somnolence, when something splashed upon the Policeman's head.

"There's that roof leaking!" he grumbled, pulling his chair a yard or two farther along the floor. "Thought you'd had it mended."

"It was mended all right," said the R.O. drowsily, "but the elephants won't leave it alone. The keeper is getting quite sick about it. They come round here about once a week and strip the thatch off."

"Beastly nuisance these wild elephants," said the Policeman. "Did you hear of the one in India who went for a walk along the road, saw a

milestone, didn't approve of it, picked it up, and carried it along with him till he came to another—then dropped it and picked up the next, and so on for miles, till he'd upset the whole road mileage system of the Punjab?"

"Milestones certainly seem to annoy them." The R.O. shifted his chair to escape a trickle from the roof. "There's a milestone near here which one of the elephants simply can't stand. Whenever he comes round this way he pulls it up, so at last they've propped it against a tree, off the road. He doesn't seem to mind it there."

"You never can tell what will get on an elephant's nerves," said the Planter. "I was staying with Cook last month; he took no end of trouble making a tennis-court, and now he's got it, he can't ever have a game on it, because an old elephant who is generally prowling about in the neighbourhood doesn't fancy the look of the tennis posts, and tears them up whenever he sees them. The elephant took huff at the weather-cock he erected in his compound, and bent the pin at right angles to the staff. Cook had it put straight, and the elephant bent it down again on his next visit, so at last Cook gave in, and let the elephant have it the way he liked."

There was a silence in which the steady hiss of the rain resounded, till the Planter asked suddenly, "There was nothing to be done about poor old Lee?"

The Policeman shook his head. "Every man in the bazaar knows how it was done and who did it, but there's no way of bringing it home. Lee died after a few hours' illness," he explained, turning to me, "and the doctors could not make out what it was—said it might be some very malignant form of fever. The 'gup' is that it was poison, and that his boy had rubbed it on the starting handle of his motor-car."

"Why?" I asked.

"No one knows," said the Policeman.

"I suppose the natives use drugs unknown to European doctors?"

"Yes, and I believe some of them are absolutely beastly—a baby's brain powdered fine, and that sort of thing—but they use real poisons as well. There's a family of hereditary poisoners in this district, and one of them is credited with having helped an old headman to get rid of as many relatives as Cæsar Borgia."

"I had a queer case of poisoning brought up before me not long ago," said the R.O. "The headman of a remote jungle village sent in a report to say that a certain boy had attempted to poison all the pilgrims who attended an annual festival at a little jungle temple not far from here. The gist of the report was this:

As soon as a large crowd had collected, the boy produced a small box from his waist-cloth, and let the wind scatter the contents into the air, whereupon four or five persons were thrown down insensible, and blood gushed from their noses and ears. To quote the words of the Court Translator, 'They were not recovered for several hours, then only after recourse to *diabolical treatment.*' When the Police Magistrate got the report, he treated it as I did —exaggeration coupled with a case or two of sunstroke. However, as evidence against the boy, the box was produced—a very small tin box, about the size of a pin-box. In it were some dried flowers of areca-nut, and a little—a *very* little—white powder. The box and its contents were sealed up solemnly with the Court seals, and despatched to the Government Analyst. He reported that he tried the stuff on guinea-pigs without result; then he heated some of it slightly, and tried again, and a guinea-pig promptly succumbed, and he himself was taken very ill."

"What happened?" I asked, as the R.O. came to a stop.

"Nothing. The boy, of course, professed entire ignorance—said the powder was given to him by his stepfather, who told him to try it on the crowd. The stepfather naturally denied the whole thing—and the Analyst can't discover what the stuff is. Of course it is known that the stepfather had an enemy in the crowd."

The conversation then turned upon spells and charms. The Policeman told us how he had received a petition from a villager whose wife was supposed to be bewitched. After a series of ceremonies performed at a certain temple, at great expense to the petitioner, the priest, "with the assistance of the deity," discovered that an evil spell had been cast upon the woman, by means of a magical object concealed in a tree which he indicated. The tree was examined, and the object discovered. At this stage intervened the village headman, who had an old feud with the petitioner, and took possession of the "charm," on the pretext that no permit had been obtained from the authorities for the rites. The petitioner contended that "in this case where there was no music," a licence was not required, and begged for an order for the return of the charm, "without which," as the petition-drawer phrased it, "he could not get the said balance ceremonies performed towards the relief of his wife." To this the scribe had added a parenthesis ("the faith on such being so great to people of petitioner's standing and knowledge").

"I saw the petitioner and his wife. She was very ill—something like epilepsy—regularly possessed of the devil, to all appearances! Her husband had taken her to hospital, and

finding that did no good, tried magic. I saw the charm, too. It was about three inches long by one wide, and looked like a piece of brown paper tied up with wire. I should have liked to keep it as a curiosity, but the man was so piteously in earnest about it that I hadn't the heart to take it from him."

"Did his wife recover after the performance of the said balance ceremonies?"

"Don't know; I have never been to that village since then."

"I had a curse put on me once," said the R.O. "I was in the jungles, seventy miles from a loaf of bread. The railway engineer, the irrigation inspector, and myself were the only white men in a district of over 1000 square miles. I had gone out to superintend the clearing of a ruined temple. We were getting along nicely, when a cry was raised from the edge of the jungle where some men were clearing—"Cobra! Cobra!" I seized my gun. A Buddhist priest from a neighbouring temple who was standing there in his yellow robe watching the proceedings cried, 'Let it be; it is wicked to kill a cobra!' I didn't wait to argue with him—wasn't going to have my coolies bitten; but the cobra was in some very thick undergrowth, partly cut, and I could catch only little glimpses of him now and again. I circled round and round the spot—rather ticklish work, as I had no notion where he might be, from one minute to the next. After a bit, he put up his head within five yards of me. Bang!—got him! I hauled him out, a fine specimen, nearly five feet long. The priest stalked off in a rage, saying I should be sorry for it. Almost immediately after this I collapsed with a sudden attack of fever."

"*Damnum minatum*," I murmured, "*et malum secutum*."

The R.O. is not versed in Scots Law. "Don't know about that," he said suspiciously, "but I was clean bowled over, all in a minute—had to crawl into my cart and go straight home to bed. I suppose, to make the story complete, I ought to have sent for the priest, and got him to take his curse off, like the man in 'The Mark of the Beast'—in fact, the village headman seriously suggested that I should do so, when he came to see me and found me in bed. But I took quinine and phenacetin, and those prosaic remedies had their effect."

"Awful scoundrels some of those Buddhist priests," said the Planter. "Lindsay was telling me some of his adventures. He has to go round inspecting temple finances, and so forth. In one place their goings-on were a little too steep, and he told them they'd have to pull up. They cursed him. He didn't mind, but

when he was going away down the river next day, there were little bits of paper stuck all over the bushes on the bank, and his boatmen wouldn't stir. They said it was some awful spell of the priests, and they would die if they started before it had been lifted. It took him hours to persuade them to get a move on. Luckily, he knows a lot about Buddhism—we call him 'the Buddhist'—so he could throw in a few counter-spells if they were wanted."

"Was he any the worse?" I asked.

"Fatter than ever when last I saw him," said the Planter brutally.

"There was a Buddhist priest up at the Madhu Festival who offered to charm my leg when I sprained it," said the R.O. "I think he really knew something of bone-setting. He inspected the leg and handled it most professionally, but I didn't let him do anything."

"What is the Madhu Festival?" I asked; "I never heard of it."

"Few Europeans outside the district have, thank God!" said the Policeman.

"I expect it's spoilt now," said the R.O. "In the old days, before the railway 'civilised' the country, the Madhu Festival was a really good show. Now every Tom, Dick, and Harry can get there quite easily by rail, and the glamour of the old pilgrimage days is quite lost."

"Tell me about it," I begged.

"Ask the Policeman—he was there more than once on special duty, and knows more of it than most Europeans."

"I really don't know much," said the Policeman. "It is very hard to find out when it really started, and what was the origin of it. There has been a shrine to a Goddess of Healing at Madhu, venerated by Hindus and Buddhists alike, long before Catholic priests came to the place and built a church in honour of the Divine Mother. Every year a festival is held, and attended apparently by all castes and creeds. Imagine about 30,000 people, all camping out under a tank bund, with their cattle, asses, oxen, goats, wives, and children, in an open plain. They erect a few temporary palm-leaf huts to form a street; there is a temporary police-station, market hospital, post-office, all of palm-leaf—in fact, it is a sort of picnic town. Every one—Buddhist, Hindu, Mahommedan, Christian—comes to Mass in the church. But it is not so much the mixture of religions that strikes one—you get that in other places,—it is the mixture of castes. You will see the low-caste man rubbing shoulders with the high-caste man—literally rubbing shoulders, for they are packed so tight in the church that you could walk on their heads, and there are no chairs. I really can't describe the scene. I remember noticing a woman with the

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mark of Siva traced in ashes on her forehead; at the Elevation of the Host I saw her lift up her sucking child from her breast for the blessing of the Great Mother. Not a word could any one understand of the service, even if it were not in Latin, on account of the incessant din. Outside they let off guns and crackers,—there's nothing a native loves as much as fireworks, and he generally lets them off by daylight,—and a native band plays popular tunes, except actually during the Mass. On the last day of the festival all the pilgrims—all religions and castes, mind you—sit down together to a sort of love feast. It's an extraordinary sight. They're perfectly orderly, and squat down quietly to wait their turn. No one touches a mouthful till the blessing has been given by the Catholic Bishop of Jaffna. They think that if they move, or stand up, or don't behave properly, something dreadful will happen to them. Then the image of the Virgin is carried in procession, and they let off guns and make a general row, and pelt it with confetti. I saw people searching for the scattered stuff, and asked an old woman why she was collecting it. She said it was "sacred" after having touched the image. I suppose they take it home and make medicines of it, as they do of the sand from the church compound. Then, after the feast is over, they all rush home, and next day the place is a wilderness again."

"I remember," said the R.O., "that my cart-driver would not let me leave the camp until the blessing had been given by the Bishop—and he was a Saivite, mind you. He assured me that his bulls would die if we started before the blessing. Of course he was enjoying himself, and did not want to leave, but all the same I think he thoroughly believed in the blessing."

"What struck me about it," said the Policeman, "was, that with all those thousands collected on the spot, not even the smallest offence was committed. Of course the civilising railway that the R.O. mentioned may have altered things, and brought unbelievers from the slums of Colombo and elsewhere, but in my time it was a most orderly and well-conducted assembly. Even petty thefts were unknown. Anything that is found without an owner, from a stray buffalo to a child or a necklace, is taken to the Cross in the church compound, and any one who has lost anything goes there to look for it. That compound is a weird sight sometimes."

The R.O. nodded. "When I was there people were praying in front of the Cross all through the day, and at intervals some one or other was possessed by a devil and rushed screaming into the jungle. The friends

and relations followed. It's a great process. The possessed person, after running about frantically, rushes up to a tree and embraces it. Then the professional exorciser asks how many devils are in him or her, and the names of them, and for each devil a lock of hair is cut off the head of the patient and nailed to the tree. Then the demoniac is carried back in a state of absolute exhaustion. In obstinate cases this process has to be repeated several times, and sometimes the demoniac is beaten most unmercifully with a cane by the exorciser. The men are much quieter than the women; one woman that I saw was absolutely frantic. It's extraordinary what a hold Madhu has on the people. The one oath they will not break is the oath on Madhu Church. If you get a liar in court, and ask him to take it, he won't, unless his story happens to be true—or at any rate, his adversary is comforted by the conviction of the sudden and fearful end that is bound to follow such perjury. If a child is ill or anything goes wrong, the first thing that a native of those parts does, whether he is Buddhist, Hindu, Mahommedan, or Catholic, is to make a vow to Madhu Church."

"One of the priests let me turn over a heap of ex-votos," said the Policeman. "They were made of thin silver, some the sort of thing that a child could cut out with a pocket-knife, and some real works of art. There were legs and eyes, and fishing-nets and boats; there was a capital figure of an old man with his fists doubled over his very fat tummy—no need to ask his complaint. They bring offerings in kind, too—fowls and goats, and so on, and the Church sells them again to any one who wants them, so that the same old hen may be offered a score of times during the festival, and each time the Church pockets money on the transaction."

The Planter gave a loud snore, and the R.O. stretched out a foot and kicked him gently. "Wake up! it's your turn to entertain the company. B—— wants you to tell him a story that he can write down in the diary he is keeping of the manners and customs of the barbarous islanders."

The Planter protested that he knew no stories, and was too sleepy to remember them if he did.

"You don't go to sleep again till you've done your bit," said the Policeman firmly. "Arthur and I have 'bukked' till we're hoarse. Tell him about the men of Tumpané; they're your neighbours, or not far from you."

"It happened after the riots," the Planter began, yawning.

"The riots of '15," interjected the Policeman. "The Sinhalese attacked the Mahommedan traders — 'Moor-

men,' as they call them out here — and plundered their houses. Tumpané is a division of the Kandy district."

"When you've quite finished," the Planter remarked, snappishly, "perhaps you'll let me explain to B—— that the men of Tumpané have been noted from time immemorial for their stupidity. It is not so much that they are a set of dull clodhoppers, as that they are incapable of reasoning. They think, but they think wrong. When the riots were all over in other places, the men of Tumpané gathered together and held a solemn meeting. 'We, too, must be in this, like our neighbours,' said some; 'it will never do for after-generations to say that the men of Tumpané took no part in the riots. They will say, "The men of Tumpané again! always different from their neighbours!"' 'Yes,' said others, 'but we have nothing against the Moormen. We are friendly. It is true that they lend us money at exorbitant rates of interest, but we are not at enmity with them.' 'Well, we must try to be like other people, and we must attack their mosque——' 'How would it be,' suggested one wise man, 'for us to raise a subscription, and go to the Moormen and say, "Here we bring you money, now let us attack your mosque?"' 'An excellent idea!' they all exclaimed. So a committee was appointed to collect subscriptions, and after a long time a sum of Rs. 350 was scraped together, and a deputation elected to call on the Moormen, and make the solemn proposal to attack their mosque, and pay over the rupees, so as to show there was no ill-feeling.

"In the meantime the Moormen got wind of the meetings of the men of Tumpané, and, suspecting that something was up, gathered in full force outside their mosque. 'We have come,' said the simple folk of Tumpané, 'to offer you Rs. 350, which we bring in our hands, in order that you shall give us permission to attack your mosque.'

"The Moors were a bit surprised, but would have none of it. 'You attack our mosque? Not for Rs. 150,000!'

"The poor men of Tumpané, very chopfallen, returned to their village and held another meeting. 'As the Moors will not accept the money we have collected,' they decided, 'we must refund it, and attack the mosque without payment.' The refunding took some time, as the sums collected were mostly small, and the attack on the mosque was still further delayed. When it came off the Moors were more than a match for the men of Tumpané, and drove them off, utterly routed. And the men of Tumpané are still wondering why they were prosecuted in the Police Court."

II.

The next day broke clear and fine, and the R.O., the Planter, and I started once more on our progress.

It was jungle all the way, with now and then an open space. Sometimes the road was bordered on either side by broad strips of grass, giving the effect of a wide avenue. Sometimes it was no more than a track, with the trees interlacing across it to form a perfect arch. Sometimes in a clearing, we wandered among the ruins of temples and monasteries long forgotten—broken flights of steps, their "guard-stones," half sunk in the ground, still displaying seven-headed cobras—tall pillars leaning over at every angle—giant Buddhas staring blindly under level eyelids—all covered with rank undergrowth. Or the path would lead us to half a score of low wattle-and-daub huts beneath a fine old tank bund.

Brown-skinned men would come out to stare at us and our guns, gaining courage in a little while to offer us freshly-plucked cocoa-nuts, or wild honey and buffalo curd. Shy but friendly, they were like the deer who came to watch us at our breakfast one morning, much interested, but ready to slip away at the first alarm. The women were generally in the background, but did not show themselves much. At one place where we pitched our tents near a garden, we noticed dark eyes peering at us through the hedge.

The jungle round the village is often cleared of weeds and undergrowth, and at this season of the year, when the grass is green, presents a beautiful park-like appearance. But for fever, occasional failure of crops, the inroads of elephants, and the wiles of the local usurer—four pretty stout "buts"—the life of these jungle folk would appear to be ideal. Fever is a bad scourge. I was shown the "garden" of one old man, into which an elephant had made a midnight raid; the few young and thriving cocoa-nut trees were pulled up in wanton mischief, and the crops carefully stored in the granary had been pillaged, and the granary itself knocked over—all the work of a single night. Little wonder then that the R.O. had small sympathy with the elephants.

One morning we found an elephant on the path stripping trees, solitary and magnificent. On an evening on the edge of a jungle overlooking a marsh, the R.O. was looking through his glasses for signs of deer on the farther side, when his tracker whispered, "Aliya! Aliya!" (elephant). Turning and glancing over his shoulder, he saw an old bull elephant within twenty paces of him. It was an awkward situation;

no one can reckon upon the temper of a lone elephant, and in case of a misunderstanding, it would have been impossible to stop him with a ·303 rifle. Luckily, he took no notice of us.

Two evenings later we ran into another. He was drinking at a lotus-pond, and we had passed him before we saw him. It was an unforgettable sight—a jungle pool covered with pink and blue and white lotus flowers, the huge solitary silent figure knee-deep amongst them, the setting sun filtering through the branches of the trees down on to the water.

Never have I seen so many peacocks as in that trip. In some parts of the jungle they were thick as pheasants in a spinney at home. The R.O. shot at one whose head was just visible above the long grass. It was not a large target, but the distance was not great. Away it flew, trailing three and a half feet of glittering tail over the trees, so splendid a vision that even though it was our dinner that was taking flight, we could not grumble.

"The Vanniah's[1] friend must have been at my rifle," said the R.O. as he reloaded. "The other day I was out with one of my Vanniahs. We had to cross a lagoon, and as we were being paddled over, we talked of 'charms.' One of the minor headmen who was with us is supposed to be a bit of an adept, and as it was beginning to rain heavily, and I did not want a ducking so early in the day, I suggested that he had better turn on a charm. He said he didn't know any against rain, only against elephants and wild buffaloes and such things. However, the Vanniah assured me that there were people who knew charms for everything, and that he knew a man who could charm your gun so that you missed every shot. So I told the Vanniah to produce the man, and I would back my gun against his charms. It's quite cheering to find so-called 'educated' Christians believing in such things—the Vanniah is a Wesleyan, and speaks English as well as I do."

I asked whether there were charms to work good as well as evil. The R.O. described how an old tracker in the Wanni country went through certain incantations to give success in a shooting trip. "He took my rifle in both hands, laid it across his knees as he squatted on the ground, and breathed on it, making a most peculiar noise. Then he stroked the barrel down one way, and muttered to himself. Then he breathed on it again, making the same noise, and stroked it both ways from the centre, and said more incantations. Then he stroked it the reverse way to his first pro-

[1] Vanniah = chief headman.

cess, and flicked his fingers as soon as he came to the end of the barrel, and the charm was complete—but I did not find it had any effect on my rifle."

We had now reached the edge of a large swamp, about two miles square, not far from the sea. On the sea side of it was a "bund"—whether artificial or not I could not determine—on which were tall trees shutting out the sea, the booming of which sounded quite close. The swamp was studded with stunted trees, the branches of which were literally packed with birds, while waterfowl of all descriptions paddled and swam beneath them. The swamp itself is impassable, as owing to the crocodiles, which are here said to be man-eaters, no man will wade in; while the stumps of dead trees effectually prevent approach by a canoe, which, however carefully manœuvred, would soon be spiked. Flamingoes, teal, and ibis of several species, kingfishers, cranes, pelicans, egrets and herons, all are congregated together. I fired my gun into the air, and such a whirl of wings and dazzle of plumage was surely never produced before. It is a perfect Birds' Paradise, inviolable by man, though the ugly snouts of lurking crocodiles just peering above the edge of the water, under many of the bushes, foretold the fate of any nestlings that might fall into the water.

It was during the course of another trip with the R.O. that we passed through one of the game sanctuaries that have been established to protect the deer and other game from annihilation by the ever-increasing number of guns. Wandering through very wild country, where most of the "roads" were nothing but village paths, we came to a rock with seven water-holes in it. The holes are deep, and run back some way under the rock, so that the water in them never fails. Above the rock is another slab of stone, on which still remain traces of a building. We dug up several bricks. Here there was once a monastery in which dwelt seven virgins, renowned for their piety; each had her own bath in the rock below. The spirits of these virgins still haunt the place, and protect the animals that come to drink at the water-holes.

There are legends for almost every rock and jungle in the wild country where "passengers" (as tourists are called in the island) do not come, but they are not to be collected easily. Some of the village folk are tainted with modernism, or affect to be: a headman in the neighbourhood of the rock sanctuary was of opinion that the animals were protected not so much by the spirits of the holy maidens as by the bad aim of the shooters. Those most deeply imbued with traditional lore will not disclose a word of it if they have reason to suspect that any one

of their auditors may be laughing at them. But the R.O. could unlock their tongues. He made friends wherever he went, even with some Veddahs whom we once encountered when we were motoring through a district under his care. They were delighted with the car, but when he offered to take some of them for a run in it, not one would venture.

"Why don't you want to come?" he asked.

"Our wives would not like it."

"Why wouldn't they like it?"

"Wasting our time in that way when we ought to be getting them food!" said the Veddahs piously, showing themselves as clever as civilised folk in finding excuses, and putting the blame on their wives.

One of the most curious legends that we gathered in the course of our travels was the legend of the Golden Eel. We were camped above the road, beside a huge waterfall overhung with creepers and bamboos. Below the road is a deep valley, down which the stream winds. The waterfall made such a noise that it almost drowned the voice of the R.O. as he told me the legend.

"Long years ago a huge creeper grew through a fissure in this rock and dammed up the stream, and the country became flooded. The people were much troubled, because no one was able to climb the rock to cut it down. At last a wise man contrived a swing of jungle ropes, and by swinging himself to and fro, came within such a distance of the creeper that he could slash at it as he swayed backwards and forwards above it. But he could make only one cut at each movement, and it took him three and three-quarter lunar months to complete the work.

"When the last strand of the creeper was severed, a huge golden eel appeared in the fissure of the rock. The wise man at once remembered a saying that 'whosoever should eat the head of the Golden Eel should be made King of Ceylon.' The eel apparently knew of the prophecy, and was unwilling to lose his head, for he darted down inside the rock and came out again at the stream, two miles below; but the wise man was there waiting, and slew him, and took the dead eel home to his wife to be cooked for his dinner.

"Now while the eel was being cooked, the wise man went out to drive his cattle home; and during his absence a low-caste man, a tom-tom beater, came to the house to present the wise man with a cloth which he had woven. And as it is unseemly to turn away a low-caste man from the house of a high-caste man without offering food, the wise man's wife, knowing nothing of the prophecy, gave to the tom-tom beater the head of the eel.

"No sooner had he eaten it than virtue descended on him, so he took his bow and arrow and went to demand an audience of the King. On being conducted into the King's presence, he drew a circle round himself so that no harm should befall him, and boldly demanded to be made King. The courtiers laughed, and the King, thinking him a madman and wishing to humour him, promised that he should reign for as long as it might take an arrow shot from his bow to fall to the earth.

"The tom-tom beater joyfully shot an arrow into the air, and the King and his Court waited for it to descend. But the God Vishnu caught it in mid-air, and it did not fall for eight years. Thus for eight years the tom-tom beater ruled Ceylon, until Vishnu let the arrow drop, when the kingdom passed back to the rightful King. And the beginning of all this was the creeper which grew on the rock beside which we are camping."

It was during a trip in the Wanni country that the R.O. proposed that we should go to look for the Lost Temple.

"Somewhere or other in the jungles hereabouts there is a rocky hill, and on the hill are the remains of an old temple, and within the temple a treasure is buried. The treasure chamber is closed by a huge stone door with a hole in it. You can make sure that you have got the right door by thrusting a stick into the hole, when an unseen hand will grasp it."

"Auld Redcap at Hermitage," I suggested.

The R.O. does not know the Border, and ignored the remark. "If you spit on the stick, I'm told you can draw it out again," he said. "I should like to go and look for the Temple, though they say that if you look for it, you can never find it. You get there only by losing yourself. People who have been benighted in those jungles declare that they have come suddenly upon the Temple, and that a Brahmin has come out of it and given them food and drink. Fairy music is heard—tom-toms and bells—and then the wayfarer falls asleep, to wake up next morning and find the Temple vanished. One of my coolies told me that an old woman had shown him some rice that the Brahmin gave her, which she kept and brought home to her village. Others say that you cannot bring back any of the food—a man who hid a handful of it and tied it up in his waist-cloth found nothing but sand and stones next day. I remember coming home one evening and seeing lightning playing over the jungle where the Temple is said to be. 'How bright the lightning is!' I said to one of my headmen who was with me. 'No, it is no ordinary lightning that we see there,' said the headman, 'it is the

fires and torches at the Temple where they hold some solemn rite.' Ever since then I've meant to look for the Temple as soon as I had a chance."

So we wandered up and down the jungle for several hours, and found more than one rocky hill, but not the hill that we sought. The jungle was evidently infested with porcupines and bears, and it was somewhat risky scrambling among the rocks, as a bear might appear at any corner. Finally we gave up the search.

It was a magical night when we returned to camp. With a large moon riding overhead, and the trees casting huge silent shadows across the road, one might have thought we were wandering in some "dream-avenue" at home, save when a cluster of fire-flies would throw out their tiny sparks, or a great flying-fox sail by, noiseless, "on leathern wing." The spells of the jungle were all round us, and we were unable to break them. The Lost Temple is still hidden somewhere among the trees, to be found of none but those who have lost themselves.

ON HAZARDOUS SERVICE.

BY MERVYN LAMB.

CHAPTER XVIII.—IN LILLE.

We left Jean and Adrienne safely ensconced at Lille in the house of a young invalid French lady named Valèrie de ——. The house, a fine old mansion, far surpassed anything which Adrienne had ever previously inhabited, but it was rather dreary, as the only occupant, besides the invalid, was an elderly serving-maid named Léonie, who managed to get through work which in England would have occupied two or three persons. As has already been stated, Valèrie's mother was on the other side of the lines, whilst her two brothers were with the French army, one as an officer, the other as a priest, and her only sister had been conscripted into a labour gang, where we have already made her passing acquaintance.

Valèrie herself was a sweet-faced girl of about Adrienne's age and of somewhat similar height and colouring, but she suffered from a weak heart, and was incapable of any exertion, a condition which the vicissitudes of life in Lille had accentuated to an alarming degree. She was a devout Catholic, and her family were intimate with local clerical circles, and in particular with a high dignitary of the Church, whom we will call "le Curé."

The latter, from the earliest days of the War, had stuck to his post, and had played a noble part amongst the inhabitants of Lille. It was he who bearded the German authorities to demand justice for his flock, when the behaviour of the invaders passed the bounds of endurance. It was he again who helped to organise emergency hospitals, where French and British wounded were tended by the ladies of the city, at a period when the Germans had neither the time nor possibly the inclination to accept any burden which did not directly lead to an early and successful termination of the war.

French ladies, as a rule, are entirely ignorant of the art of nursing, but Valèrie and her sister had worked devotedly in one of these hospitals to the best of their ability until the former's health had completely broken down, after which the most she could do was to hide fugitives, as in the present instance.

Lille itself was swarming with German soldiers, who regarded the town much in the same light as the British looked on Amiens, a centre of life and

gaiety, where for a few hours the horrors of war could be forgotten. But over the unfortunate inhabitants rested an iron hand; and though the band of patriots, which included "le Curé," still continued their good work, the restrictions on movement, frequent perquisitions and arrests, and, worst of all, the tell-tale list of inmates which had to be posted on the door of every house, made it increasingly difficult.

Still, the few remaining survivors of the French garrison were hidden and fed; at night the paper-balloons, carrying news of the enemy's dispositions, were despatched on favouring winds to the Allies, occasionally to reach their destination; papers dropped by British aeroplanes were circulated, and when these ceased to come "le Curé" was still undefeated, and contrived to receive and circulate the Poldhu and Eifel wireless communiqués, thereby greatly heartening the faithful, and giving the lie to mendacious stories of German victories.

For the benefit of those who do not understand wireless, it may be explained that he could not, of course, send any wireless messages with his instrument, as this would have entailed the use of plant which he did not possess; also the illicit waves would at once have been detected by one of the German "police" sets maintained for this very purpose. A receiving set, on the other hand, cannot be detected or located except by actually finding the aerial or instrument.

Besides all this, there still existed in Lille organisations which kept the Allies informed by more certain methods of what was passing in the neighbourhood, and the countermeasures of the enemy, though they resulted in the arrest and condemnation of many hundreds, never entirely eradicated this ulcer.

Jean was a welcome recruit, and he was soon fully employed in gathering up the threads leading to his friends farther south, this work keeping him fully employed and taking him away a great deal from the city.

Incidentally he ascertained that Adrienne's friend at the level-crossing at Maubeuge had paid the penalty for his patriotism, though, fortunately for Adrienne's peace of mind, not apparently in direct connection with the letter which she had sent to him by the German Staff Officer.

Adrienne's position presented a more difficult problem, since she suffered a severe reaction after all she had been through, and was unfit for any very active work for a considerable time. However, it was arranged that a convent should take her under its wing for a time, as even the Germans were diffident about inquiring too closely into the doings of the sisters, and with them she soon recovered her health.

Valèrie was getting steadily

worse, and eventually "le Curé" obtained permission to send some one to nurse her, and in the guise of "Sister Marie" Adrienne returned to the big house, armed with the necessary papers, and able to register her name on the front door, which just made all the difference between incessant anxiety and a feeling of comparative security.

But this state did not satisfy her ardent spirit for long, and she commenced to study ways and means of taking a more active part in the doings of the patriots. Unfortunately or fortunately, she did not like to leave Valèrie for any length of time, and it was decided that she could be most useful in watching the German counter-espionage agents, who were numerous and efficient, and had recruited many traitors amongst the meaner classes of the inhabitants. These latter, as they became known, were carefully black-listed for present and future information, and more than one came to a sudden and mysterious end, whilst others no doubt have been suitably dealt with since the armistice.

Details of her work would not be particularly interesting, but one episode must be mentioned, as it had an effect on subsequent developments.

The wireless receiving instrument was installed in a church tower, and it was Adrienne's duty, amongst others, to keep watch below in the evenings whilst the communiqués were being taken in, for which her garb rendered her eminently suitable, as being unlikely to arouse suspicion.

It was whilst so employed that she noticed a woman enter the church and engage apparently in devotions. There was nothing strange in that, but she remembered that she had seen this same person talking to a German in a café, and the two occurences did not seem quite consistent. Adrienne watched her from between her fingers, and presently the woman got up and walked past the door behind which lay the steps leading up to the tower. As she passed it she just glanced at it, and then left the church.

Quickly Adrienne pressed the electric switch, concealed under the seat, which warned the men in the tower that it was time to get away, and then she followed the woman, who eventually turned into the café where Adrienne had previously noticed her, and which was a place much frequented by German officers. She could not enter the café dressed as she was, and was in some doubt whether to wait outside or to go home and change into her other disguise, which she wore when visiting such places. She decided to take the chance that the woman would have her evening meal there, and hurried home, whence she shortly emerged, dressed in Valèrie's clothes; and armed with that lady's papers, she boldly approached the café.

Then a most unfortunate thing happened, for as she entered she almost bumped into a German officer. The latter was about to apologise and pass on, when he caught sight of Adrienne's face, at the same moment as she recognised her former lodger, Major von Brittstein. "Ah, good evening, Mademoiselle, this is indeed an unexpected pleasure," said he, "and what may you be doing in Lille?" "Visiting a sick friend," said she promptly, "thanks to the kindness of the German authorities, who have been most sympathetic in the matter."

"Mademoiselle was about to enter the café—was she expecting to meet a friend?" said he, looking at her keenly, and evidently half expecting an admission that she was carrying on an intrigue with one of the German officers who formed a large part of the *clientèle*.

"Mais non, Monsieur, but France is so *triste*, and I was attracted by the lights, and was just going to peep inside."

All this time she was torn between anxiety to get away from the German officer, and fear of losing sight of the suspicious woman whom she had seen in the church; and when the Major said in his grandest manner, "Mademoiselle must do me the honour of permitting me to return the hospitality which she extended to me at her home," she took her courage in both hands and followed him in. Her quick eye noted the woman talking to a German officer at a table near the centre, and calling her escort's attention to an empty table close to them, she succeeded in steering him to it, despite his obvious predilections for a more secluded spot. Then, when they had sat down after the customary clicking of heels, Adrienne plunged boldly into the subject which was agitating her mind—viz., had he delivered her letter, and did he or did he not know that the recipient had subsequently been condemned as a spy?

"I have to thank Monsieur for delivering my letter to my friend at the level-crossing at Maubeuge. I hope that Monsieur did not have great trouble in finding him, and that his journey was not delayed."

To her intense relief he replied that the man was in position at the crossing, and that it had been no trouble whatever; in any case, for such a charming lady one would do a great deal more, and he looked at her admiringly, for in Valèrie's clothes she certainly filled the eye. Since he made no further allusion to the subject, she concluded that he was unaware of the man's fate, and relieved of this fear, she set herself to carry on a desultory conversation, endeavouring to prevent him from becoming too familiar, and at the same time straining her ears to try and catch the conversation at the next table. This latter had ceased when Adrienne and her companion first sat down, but assuming either

that they could not be overheard, or that a lady taking coffee with a German officer was not likely to be a dangerous eavesdropper, they gradually became less cautious.

Their conversation was evidently not the usual kind of garrison-town intrigue, and gradually she gathered that the subject was what she had suspected, for she caught words such as "*communiqué*," "*moral de la population*," "*l'église*."

At this point she had to concentrate her attention on her companion, who was bombarding her with questions about her sick relative, and pressing for her address. He was only passing through Lille, and would be leaving the following day; but in the meantime he had no work to do, and hoped that she would help him to forget the horrors of war during his brief stay. He himself was staying at an hotel, but he could well imagine that he would be more comfortable "*chez Mademoiselle*," if she had a spare room to offer him.

This was serious, for if he insisted on seeing her home, she knew that the whole fraud would be discovered; and whilst she was still racking her brains to think of a way out, without losing sight of the suspect, there was an unexpected diversion, for a party of German Security Police entered the café, and proceeded to inspect the identity papers of all the civilians, which was not an unusual proceeding but singularly inopportune from Adrienne's point of view. Indeed she was in a quandary, for if von Brittstein asked to have a look at her papers, as he might quite well do in order to get her address, he would see at once that they were not hers at all. This must be avoided at all costs, and she began to search fruitlessly for her papers as the men approached them, finally saying to the Major, in seeming alarm, "Oh, what shall I do? I have come out without my *carte d'identité*."

"Never mind," said that officer, "I won't let these dogs worry you," and as one of them came to their table, he waved him magnificently away, saying, "The lady is a friend of mine, and we cannot be disturbed; I answer for her."

The man hesitated, for though he was within his rights and only doing his duty, a Staff Officer was not a pleasant person to tackle as he soon found out, for he was glad to get away from von Brittstein's wrath, which followed an endeavour to insist on the production of the lady's papers.

Unfortunately whilst the altercation was in progress the couple at the next table had slipped out, and the consequences became clear next day, though they could not in any way be laid at Adrienne's door, since she had given an initial warning to the wireless operators.

Meantime, sitting in the café, she was still left with the prob-

lem of getting rid of von Brittstein, and the curfew hour was rapidly approaching. Finally she had to make a move, when that gentleman, as she had feared, announced his intention of seeing her home, with the evident wish to continue the conversation there, and Adrienne was forced to assent to his seeing her at any rate as far as the door, as he would not take "No" for an answer.

They went out together and made their way to a side street not far from the café, where she stopped outside an imposing-looking door.

"I hope Monsieur will not insist on coming in to-night," she said, "because *ma tante* is very ill, and I fear that the arrival of a strange German officer might seriously agitate her. Besides, *mon oncle* does not love Germans, and I should not like Monsieur to be insulted after his kindness to me. If, however, Monsieur will do us the honour to take *déjeuner* at our humble table to-morrow, I will in the meantime explain how good he has been to me, both at my home and again this evening, and they will be very proud to entertain such a distinguished guest. Monsieur will not be leaving, he said, till two o'clock, so if he will come at twelve, we shall be able to have a long talk; and as *ma tante* is confined to bed and *mon oncle* is going to Roubaix on business, we shall be *tête-à-tête*," she added, with a meaning smile. The idea of avoiding the uncle decided the German to agree to this compromise, and he accepted the invitation with a good grace.

"I will just wait before going in till Monsieur is out of sight, as I must think of what *les domestiques* may say if they see me at this hour with a German officer. Monsieur is sure he can find the house again? Good night, then, and *à demain*." She hoped that she was going to get rid of him, but he was not prepared to be dismissed quite as summarily as this, and insisted on an immediate reward, which she was obliged to concede, after which he at last departed.

She waited until he had turned the corner, and then hurried off in the opposite direction, reaching Valèrie's house without further incident. The latter was able to identify the big house as belonging to one of the oldest and proudest families in Lille, and the two were convulsed with mirth as they pictured the reception which von Brittstein was likely to get when he presented himself; in fact, Valèrie's sense of humour proved to be much stronger than her heart, and she had eventually to be put to bed in a state of collapse.

As has been indicated above, the news which "le Curé" brought next morning showed that the laugh had not been entirely against the enemy, for the church had been raided the previous evening whilst Adrienne was detained in the

café, and evidently the woman and her companion had gone out to put the finishing touches to their arrangements.

The operators had got away in response to Adrienne's warning, but had foolishly not removed the essential parts of the apparatus, which had been discovered by the Germans and were absolutely irreplaceable in the "occupied" territory. No arrests had been made, but the old priest expected considerable trouble for a time, and the band of patriots would have to keep quiet until the storm blew over. He was very sorrowful at the loss of the wireless instrument, as apart from the communiqués, word had been sent to England that instructions could be received by its means, and now some one would have to go there to bring back fresh valves. There were a certain number of envoys available, including Jean, who had done the trip once already, but he was engaged in other important work, and could ill be spared.

Application had been made to the Germans that Valèrie should go with the next batch of *repatriés*, but no one had any idea when it would leave, nor even if she would be included in the party. Also she was hardly in a fit state of health to get back again *en fraude*, which was an essential part of any plan.

Adrienne said she was quite prepared to try to get to Holland in the same way that Jean had done, and "le Curé" agreed that this might be a solution as a last resort, but he thought that she had already run quite sufficient risks, and hoped it would not be necessary to select her; so for the time being they left it at that, the parting instructions of the old man being that she was to lie low, in case von Brittstein had circulated her description to the police.

Adrienne's own opinion was that he would not have done so, as the incident did not redound to his credit, and he would be unaware that she was "wanted" as a deserter from a labour gang.

It was only some three nights later when, after they had retired to bed, they were roused by a furious knocking at the front door. Léonie was sent down to ascertain what was wanted, and found two Germans, who stated that they had come to fetch Valèrie. Their instructions were to wait for her, as she was to proceed by train that night, having been selected for repatriation, and they could only give her fifteen minutes to prepare for the journey. Léonie informed the men that her mistress was very ill, and that she did not know whether she could accompany them; but their reply was that if she did not come willingly they would be forced to pull her out of bed and take her as she was, and unless Léonie took the message at once they would have to do so themselves.

The poor woman, knowing

that they were quite capable of carrying out their threat, hurried upstairs to deliver the message, and found Adrienne in a dressing-gown, sitting on her mistress's bed, and holding her hand to calm her, for they both thought that one or both of them was to be arrested, and Léonie's news was reassuring to a certain extent. Valèrie had long been looking forward to rejoining her mother, but now that the time had actually come, she shuddered at the thought of the journey, and with good reason doubted whether she would arrive alive at the other end. However, she got up and made an effort to dress, but quickly collapsed again on to the bed, and Adrienne saw that it would be a great risk to let her attempt the journey.

An idea struck her.

"Shall I go in your place?" she said. "We are rather alike, and I might get through, and you could go to the convent, where you would be well looked after. Then I could bring back the instrument required by 'le Curé,' and I could see your mother, and when I return I could tell you all about her, and how your brothers are. Valèrie saw the advantages of the proposal both to herself and also to the cause, and to do her justice it was the latter which really decided the question in her mind. "Yes," she gasped; and to assist Adrienne she forced herself to don the latter's uniform, and to accompany her downstairs in the guise of a sister looking after her patient.

The men compared the papers, and in the half light and muffled up as she was, Adrienne passed muster. The nurse offered to accompany her patient to the station, but, to the relief of both, the men brusquely refused to permit it, and after a last embrace Adrienne was marched off to the station, where she was put into a carriage, crowded with women, and with the blinds drawn down. Shortly afterwards the train left, the occupants having been warned that any one found moving the blinds or attempting to look out of the window would be summarily dealt with.

The whole procedure of the Germans in arranging the manner of this exodus was not dictated by either humanity or brutality, but was the result of careful calculation. To get spies behind the Allied lines was almost impossible except through Switzerland, for the sea and England, with its excellent counter-espionage system, barred the northern route. As time went on the watch on the Franco-Swiss frontier became increasingly severe, whilst to penetrate into the areas actually occupied by the armies was practically impossible, except to persons who had the very best reasons for wishing to do so. Consequently, by sending home large bodies of inhabitants *viâ* Switzerland, the Germans killed two birds with one stone, for they themselves

got rid of and saddled the Allies with a large number of useless mouths, and at the same time found a convenient means of passing through a limited number of persons, mixed up in the crowd, to spy for them.

There was, of course, the inevitable danger that the *repatriés* would give a certain amount of valuable information to the Allies, but this danger was reduced to a minimum by keeping the composition of the party secret until the last minute, and by removing the individuals summarily at night, in the manner which has been described above. The fact that the journey through the area occupied by the German Army was carried out at night also helped in preventing any information being gained, and Adrienne could bear witness to the efficiency of the methods adopted in the case of the ordinary *repatrié*. Unfortunately for themselves, the enemy on this occasion were carrying a passenger very different from the ordinary run, and this was thanks to sheer bad luck and not to any extreme sagacity on the part of the patriots, for the idea which Adrienne adopted on the spur of the moment had never even occurred to them.

CHAPTER XIX.—ADRIENNE IS REPATRIATED BY THE ENEMY.

There is no need to describe the slow and tedious journey through Belgium and then up the east bank of the Rhine. The conditions were miserable, but Adrienne, being young and strong, had less cause for complaint than the majority of the passengers, who were being evacuated for a precisely opposite reason.

There were some, however, who appeared to be able-bodied, and mindful of the stories which she had heard, Adrienne regarded these with special interest.

One in particular attracted her attention, for it was none other than the woman who had denounced their wireless operations, and she endeavoured to watch her without being observed.

Somewhat to her alarm, after a halt at Cologne, this person got into her carriage, and she wondered whether she suspected her. She was not left long in doubt, for at the first opportunity the woman asked her whether she had not seen her at Lille in the Café de la Paix, and what she had done with the handsome German officer by whom she was escorted on that occasion. Adrienne guessed that the object of the inquiry was really to find out whether the woman's own escort had been noticed on the same occasion, and she replied that she had no recollection of ever having seen her before, though she admitted

that she had a German friend, and had been to the café with him. Adrienne was still very nervous lest the woman should suspect her and get her sent back, so she decided to play a bold game. She therefore went on to explain, of course in the strictest confidence, that she had been very fond of the Major, and now that he had been transferred to the Argonne, where she was not well enough to follow him, she was glad to be going back to her mother. Please God, the war would soon be over and then she could join him in Germany, as he had promised to marry her after the war. The woman was now fairly sure that her secret was safe, and though she agreed with Adrienne that the Allies had little hope of staving off defeat much longer, she expressed unalterable loathing for the Boche and all his works — astonishment that a girl like Adrienne should have anything to do with them, and much more of the same kind, to all of which Adrienne listened with her tongue in her cheek, and got quite heated as she defended the Germans and her friend in particular. In spite of what the woman said, Adrienne's suspicions were confirmed, and she had no doubt as to why she was making the journey.

She felt, however, that she had overdone her part when they reached the frontier station where they were to stay a night before crossing into Switzerland. There the whole party were thoroughly searched, and though they were neither scrubbed nor were their heads shaved, the investigation included practically every other precautionary measure known to modern science. Adrienne had the doubtful honour of a special interview, carried out with every care to prevent its being observed by the other passengers. After being searched she was ushered into a private room, and for a moment feared that she was caught when almost in sight of safety. However, the German officer's manner, which was his strong suit, soon set her mind at rest, for he addressed her most courteously in excellent French.

"I see that Mademoiselle is being evacuated on account of her health, and I trust that the journey, which unfortunately is very trying, has not been too much for her strength." Adrienne had long since discovered that in the matter of flattery it was almost impossible to overdo it when dealing with a German, so she replied, "Oh, no, Monsieur; I well understand the difficulties of transport in time of war, and can assure you that the German authorities have tried, as they always do, to make things comfortable for us; and I, for one, am none the worse, and have no complaints to make." He smiled in a gratified manner, and replied, "I understand that Mademoiselle has a great friend in the German Army; we must hope that this

wretched war will soon be over, and that friendship between French and Germans will no longer be accounted a crime in your country. Mademoiselle would perhaps be disposed to assist in bringing that to pass?" he added tentatively.

Adrienne at first pretended not to understand what he meant, and when he endeavoured to make his meaning clearer, she indignantly protested that she could not do anything which would harm France; but she gradually yielded to his eloquence to the extent of agreeing that the English were quite a different matter, and that love must take precedence of everything, and from this it was not a very long step to the logical conclusion that it was her duty to help her lover's country, if she could do so without hurting her own.

The German could scarcely conceal his delight, for here was a potential spy of a far higher class than any he had hitherto succeeded in recruiting, and one who would not find it difficult to penetrate into the "Zone of the Armies," and establish friendships with people who might be expected to know things, and with her face and figure the rest would be easy.

Would she do him the honour of dining with him? And after displaying an appropriate degree of reluctance and wonder as to whether her German lover would like it, she eventually agreed.

The man's complacency and evident confidence in the effect of his good looks and charm of manner inwardly infuriated her, but as the road she was travelling promised to provide information which might be of great value to her friends on the other side, she suppressed her disgust at being taken for the sort of person who would betray her country.

Shortly after, they were being whirled along in a closed car to an unknown destination, and this proved to be the famous German espionage Bureau at Lörrach, which poured out a stream of spies through Switzerland directed against France.

Three hours later she rejoined the remainder of the passengers in their temporary quarters, having in her pocket a doped handkerchief, 300 francs sewn in the hem of her skirt, and in her brain several addresses; and last, but not least important, the headings on which the Germans wanted her to report.

Otherwise the information she had acquired was rather disappointing, for despite her urgent representations that she could do little if she was to work entirely by herself, the officer had declined to put her in personal touch with any one in France, which showed that he knew his business a good deal better than might have been imagined from his

dealings with Adrienne. Also he had insisted on knowing the name of her German lover, and on the spur of the moment she had given that of her old enemy, the Town Major, which perhaps was not very wise; but she could not think of any one who was dead, and thought that the elderly "Don Juan" was not the sort of man ever to disclaim a conquest.

The party crossed the frontier next morning, and to Adrienne, after three years' bondage, the change seemed extraordinary and at first almost incomprehensible. To be cheered by the kindly Swiss as they passed through the stations, to be overwhelmed with kindness when the train stopped, and to see signs of peace and prosperity on every side, was a strange contrast to the squalid misery to which she had been accustomed in the occupied territory, and gave an air of unreality to the whole journey. Eventually they passed through the Jura and halted at Pontarlier, where the refugees were examined, but this time by a friendly and sympathetic Allied Intelligence Bureau, consisting of a French officer, several French subordinates, and a young English officer. It was to this latter that Adrienne addressed herself when she was brought into the office. "I am working with Jean, the agent of the British Army, and I have information for the British Staff which perhaps I ought to give to Monsieur privately." From Jean's accounts she had imagined that he was a famous hero in the British Army, but to her surprise his name seemed to convey nothing to any one. "But before I do that," she continued, "I may be able to assist *Messieurs les Commissaires* in the examination of the refugees, and will denounce one traitor who is on the train"; and she explained the case of the woman who had travelled with her. "I also have been to the Spy Bureau at Lörrach, and am in the pay of the Germans!" The Frenchmen, whose faces had fallen at her first statement that she was working for the British, now regarded her with intense interest, and as she proceeded with her story and produced her exhibits their enthusiasm knew no bounds. The handkerchief would explain why their censorship was producing no results, for Adrienne's instructions were to soak a corner in water and then write with the resulting solution, a fact which indicated a new and unknown medium, not possible of detection by their existing methods.

For the benefit of the reader, it may be explained that such letters were to be posted in the ordinary way in France, addressed to one or other of the addresses in Switzerland given to Adrienne, whence they would be forwarded to Lörrach, and the secret writing between the lines of the apparently

harmless letter would there be developed with the appropriate chemical.

Some of the cleverest chemists in the world were engaged on both sides in the work of finding invisible inks, which would not react to any of the ordinary tests used in censorship.

She told them how the German officer had insisted on concealing the 300 francs in her skirt, because, if the French found it, she could then say that she had smuggled it out, otherwise her countrymen would suspect her; and they quite appreciated the humour of this, and told her she could keep it as her perquisite.

"Nothing would induce me to use their dirty money," interjected Adrienne; "and what is more, you may draw the further 300 francs a week which I can get, if my reports are satisfactory, by calling for letters addressed to me, *poste restante*, at a certain post-office in Paris, from which centre I am to try and get information about the British Army"; and she told them the *questionnaire* which had been given to her.

She also told them how she had absolutely refused to spy against the French Army, fond as she was of a certain German, but had allowed herself to be persuaded that *Perfide Albion* was fighting to the last Frenchman, and was really the enemy of the whole civilised world, including her beloved France. As a patriotic Frenchwoman, she had agreed that she would only be carrying out her duty in doing everything possible to harm that deceitful race. At this the Frenchman began to chaff the young Englishman unmercifully, until Adrienne intervened by saying that she had only met one English officer, but Monsieur might indeed be proud of his Army if there were many more like him in it. The young Englishman, rather overwhelmed at the unexpected compliment from such a charming girl, made shift to thank her, and the French officer added: "My young colleague here will be able to provide Mademoiselle with the very best information obtainable for the money, and with his assistance you will get the iron cross from 'Guillaume' for your charming friend at Lörrach. We are already supplying him with quite a quantity of news, and I must say this for him—he pays us well. As for the woman in the train, you need not worry further; we will attend to her." After some further discussion with the Frenchman, the young English officer informed Adrienne that he would make himself responsible for her future welfare, and would arrange in the first instance for her to visit Valèrie's mother, which promise he duly carried out, ultimately accompanying her to Paris, where he handed her over to another British officer.

Adrienne parted from him with some regret, for he was a gentleman, whose sole preoccupation was how to get away to a fighting job, from which his fatal linguistic qualifications had so far debarred him.

Poor boy, his ambition was only too fully realised.

From the British she received instructions which enabled her to send regular reports, containing the most accurate and valuable information, which included a warning of the Messines attack, and of a big surprise prepared for the Germans, the exact nature of which she could not ascertain. True, this information only reached Switzerland some hours after several hundred Germans had been blown into eternity by the British mines; but the Paris postmark, by arrangement, showed clearly that the letter had been sent off before the event, and it was apparently sheer bad luck that the French postal authorities had hung up all the letters for two or three days on this particular occasion. The gentleman at Lörrach felt certain that it was only a question of time before he would make a really big scoop, thanks to this priceless agent, "Number L. 139."

It was only when her reports ceased to come that he began to have doubts, but even this might be due to the arrest of his paymaster, who supplied her with funds, and if he could only get into touch with her again he hoped that all might still be well.

The real facts were that Adrienne was required for other work, and the Allies rightly concluded that the arrest of the paymaster would account for the stopping of the reports and cover up her tracks, at least for a time. Also the viper in their midst had had a considerably longer run than they were accustomed to give to this class of person, and they were glad to put the paymaster away, "pour encourager les autres."

CHAPTER XX.—AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

A considerable time had elapsed when we next meet Adrienne, heavily veiled, being conveyed one evening in a closed car to Boulogne *en route* for England.

Having gone through the usual formalities, she passed up the gangway of the mail steamer, and settled herself down in a deck-chair in a corner, whence she could see the usual crowd of British, mixed with a few French and Belgians, hurrying along the quay, many of them still covered in mud and dust from the trenches. It was all very new and strange to her, and she watched the scene with some interest.

As preparations were being

made to get the ship started, a car dashed up to the entrance of the station, and a young Flying Corps officer jumped out and ran along the quay, only just in time to get aboard before the gangways were removed.

Adrienne's heart gave a jump and then began to beat violently, for after she had given up all hope of ever seeing him again, at the eleventh hour fate had miraculously brought to her the only British officer in whom she took any real interest. Until this moment, indeed, she had never realised how deep the interest actually was.

She sat still, wondering if he would come in her direction; if he would recognise her; if he did recognise her, whether he would want to speak to her, and many other things which need not be expressed.

For some time she saw him no more, and then he came up on to her deck and stood leaning over the side talking to two other officers. Still Adrienne did not move, and at last her patience was rewarded, for he came along in her direction. She had taken the precaution to raise her veil, and as he threw a casual glance at her, she smiled shyly at him. For a moment he stopped in astonishment, then came up to her, his face beaming, and with the banal remark, "How on earth did you get here, Mademoiselle?" But the actual words did not matter, since in any case Adrienne would not have noticed what he said, for the look on his face was quite sufficient answer to her doubts and fears.

He brought a chair up to hers, and the two were soon deep in conversation.

Archer's story was quickly told, for it consisted merely of the humdrum life of a ferry pilot, though the girl found it interesting enough. Then she recounted her adventures: how she had been taken away from her village, though she modestly slurred over the Town Major's share in that episode, and how she had heard an aeroplane at midnight on the journey, and had thought of "Monsieur Archaire."

She had already heard from Jean the facts about this flight, but she pretended ignorance, partly to give him the pleasure of telling her himself, and partly with the object of drawing him out, in which her manœuvre was completely successful.

"But it *was* me that you heard! How splendid! Jean and I thought it had been an absolute dud, when we could not find the rendezvous, and, after all, it wasn't—by Jove! What a bit of luck!"

So they talked on, and the time flew so fast that it seemed only a minute or two before they found themselves in sight of the white cliffs and Folkestone harbour, and Archer then began to press Adrienne as to her future movements.

He must see her again—where was she staying? Would she go and visit his mother? and he would try and get away for a day or two when she was there; that would be grand! and his mother would love to have her.

Adrienne only shook her head sadly, and to all his entreaties replied that she was going on an important mission, and as at present arranged expected to leave England the following day.

"No, I cannot tell Monsieur what the mission is, for I do not think 'le Commandant' would wish it."

"But surely you can tell me," urged Archer, "for you know I would not tell any one else; besides, I've worked for the Intelligence."

"Well, I suppose there would be no harm in saying that I am going back to Lille, but I must not tell you any more." But womanlike she could not keep to this resolve, and he was horrified to learn that she was going to smuggle through some valves for the wireless installation; for having made the journey himself, he appreciated the dangers, and felt cold all over at the idea of her crossing the electric fence.

He would have been still more alarmed had he known the full extent of her mission, but by this time the ship was being tied up and it was time to think about getting on shore, whilst Adrienne had to join the other civilians in the saloon for examination by the British police, though in her case this was a pure formality, as they had been warned to expect her, and an officer was actually waiting to take charge of her.

"I have to go back to Lymphe, but I will wait for you at the station entrance," said Archer as she left him, and there she found him half an hour later, and begged the officer who had met her to excuse her for a moment, as she wished to say good-bye to a friend.

"You will write and tell me where I can see you, if you do not go at once; you promise me you will?" and, emboldened by the darkness, Archer took both her hands, and added, "*chère Adrienne.*"

"Yes, I promise," she said, smiling bravely and pressing his fingers, "and if you do not hear, you will know that I have started; and you must not worry about me, for as you and Jean always said, I am *très-débrouillard.*"

"But how shall I know how you get on over there?" said Archer. "It's horrible to think what may happen to you; could not I go instead? I did the journey once, and they might let me go again; anyway I could try."

"No," replied the girl. "No one but I can do this business, and you would not have a chance of success. Cheer up! Whatever happens, I promise to let you know if I come to

any harm, and so long as you do not hear you may assume that I am safe. Now I really cannot keep that poor man waiting any longer."

Perhaps Archer was shy, or perhaps, as is more probable, he felt that it would be dishonourable to take advantage of the girl's friendless position, for after a silent but eloquent interval, he raised her hand to his lips and then dropped it quickly.

In thinking over their last interview, as she did many times in the succeeding months, Adrienne came to the very definite conclusion that the circumstances would have justified him in proceeding to a stage beyond merely kissing her hand, but the fact remains that he did not do so, and whilst secretly regretting the fact, she honoured him for it.

Next morning he took a plane across the Channel for the last time, and she left by train for London.

(*To be continued.*)

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

WIRELESS INANITIES — A GREAT COUNTRY — THE WORN-OUT POLICY OF PRESIDENT MONROE — OUR OWN SHIBBOLETHS.

THERE was a time, not far distant, when a man might go on shipboard and congratulate himself that for a while at least he would escape from the newsmonger. The miles which separated him from his native land separated him also from the foolish gossip of the hour. He might, by the mere cessation of his curiosity, begin to see his own and his country's affairs in a just relation. He could discover for himself that the exchange of news with his friends, the garbled account of the world's history which he reads in the journals, are the mere superfluities of life, and that not the least of the joys of travel was to leave behind all the tittle-tattle which by a wrong habit of mind engrosses us.

The traveller is no longer immune. No sooner is he out of sight of land than he is pursued by the demon of "wireless." Day by day he is confronted by a few sheets of irrelevant gossip, which he is not, or should not be, in the mood to heed. He gets up in the morning, for instance, with the wonder of the South Atlantic all about him, and he is informed, with all the solemnity of a message which has come through the free unharnessed air, that Mr Robert Sievier has won £40,000 at Nice. Or his happy sense of a lotus-eater's oblivion is roughly disturbed by the statement that Mr Winston Churchill has inherited an estate in Ireland. Now in mid-ocean, where things are seen in a truer proportion, the financial affairs of these two great popular idols are matters of complete indifference. It is merely the spirit of idleness, pervading clubs and coffee-houses, which gives an interest to the good fortune which has fallen to the lot of our widely-advertised heroes. What care we for their sudden access of wealth, when we are speculating how many miles the ship has run in the last four-and-twenty hours, or at what time we shall sight St Vincent? Even if we thought that Mr Churchill's prosperity would withdraw him for ever from political life, or that the sudden comfort of £40,000 would cut short Mr Sievier's career on the turf, we should not be deeply moved at the moment when we were approaching Pernambuco; and we can only congratulate the gentleman who manipulates the "wireless" on an unbroken triumph of irrelevancy.

So he pelts us with the pebbles of useless information with a troublesome persistency.

Even if we wanted, which God forbid, to know what was happening behind us, he would tell us nothing. All that the "wireless" explains to us is what the intelligent gentleman who composes the messages following us fast thinks of those who are destined to read them. Evidently he does not hold a high opinion of us. He is persuaded that we shall hail as tidings of comfort and joy the mere rumour that Sir Worthington Evans has been chosen to take charge of the British Army. It is only at a very short distance from Charing Cross that a difference is apparent between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. But perhaps the purveyor of "wireless" scaled the height of his folly when one day he devoted three-quarters of a message, wafted to a ship, only half of whose passengers were English, to the results of football matches. He should remember that those who travel by sea have some discrimination, and that the wireless transmission of news for its own sake is not of the slightest value.

Plainly, then, those who sit at home and send news into the void care not whether their work should be well done or not. They take the same view of the business as Dr Johnson took of the trickery of the performing pigs. They wonder, with a childish naïveté, that it should be done at all. For our part, we care not how it is done. We marvel only that anybody should think it worth doing. We find it, besides, a wanton hindrance to the forgetfulness, which is one, and not the least worthy, object of travel. But, says the heedless lover of mechanical toys, to read the news of London three thousand miles away is a sign of progress. It is progress, is it, when Mr Sievier's success at *chemin de fer* is flashed through the desecrated air? It is progress, is it, that we are told across the void that Preston has beaten the Spurs? Such stuff as this will keep very well, and if the whole human race is not to be atrophied or standardised, it would be well to revise our definition of progress.

According to the fashionable jargon of our day, progress is speed. See how much better we are than our ancestors. We travel faster than they did; we have overcome all the obstacles of space and time which once were deemed invincible. Not content with rivalling at our ease the mythical ride of Dick Turpin, we shout raucous inanities across the ocean, and pretend that somebody is the better for it. For us a new restlessness is a long step towards perfection, and we find a positive virtue in sending what are called in the trade "crisp paragraphs" after the wretched traveller, who prays only to get out of the prison-house of London. All this we do in the name of progress. Petrol is our god. We sing hymns to its foolish achievements. And

as we gape at the last piece of "wireless," we pity in our foolish hearts the brave Sir Francis Drake and the gallant Hawkins, who, poor devils, gladly faced the perils of the sea, though they knew that for many a month no echo would reach them from Gloriana's Court.

Yet the many contrivances, which we confuse with virtue and progress, are merely the means to atrophy the strength and intelligence of man. Why should we walk, when to sit over a petrol-tin is to be hurled as many miles into space as we like? Why should we learn to write, when the telephone, the greatest destroyer of leisure and amenity that ever was thrust upon us, can speak for us? How, when we cross the sea, shall we change our mind when the gossip of the town comes between us and the strange sounds and stranger sights of lands which we have never known nor seen before? But, shouts the apostle of progress, you overlook the essential happiness of mankind. Thrice fortunate are you, to whom the glad intelligence vibrates through the air that Mr Sievier has won a victory at Nice, and made prisoners of forty thousand sovereigns. Perhaps we should press the apostle of progress unduly if we suggested that the wise man is of more importance than the motor-car in which he rides, and that if only words be winged with wisdom it matters not by what means they are transmitted, or how long the process of transmission lasts. Much that was said and written two thousand years ago by poets and philosophers has not yet reached the heart of man. But be of good courage. It takes but a few hours to impress upon the reluctant traveller under the Southern Cross the great truth that Mr Sievier is richer to-day than he was yesterday by £40,000. Such is the supreme triumph of progress and civilisation.

It is not in this place that we would extol the beauty of Rio de Janeiro, or that we would attempt to describe the splendour of its harbour. For the moment we would be silent on the wonderful approach, prepared by a day's journey of changing loveliness. Across the sapphire sea was ever a vision of gorgeous palaces, the cloud-capped towers of mountains fifty miles away. And then, with the traveller's good fortune, we fell into the midst of the carnival. We were confronted with a mad, joyous, multi-coloured world—dancing, laughing, chattering in sheer good humour. We walked up the broad and busy Avenida, threaded easily the vast crowd which filled its wide spaces, and instantly received an impression of a great country, conscious mistress of itself and of its destiny. And as we caught a first glimpse of Brazil, the worn-out policy of President Monroe came to our mind, and we wondered at the folly

of men and politicians, who cling obstinately to words and phrases many years after they have lost their meaning.

Had not the Americans, at the making of the peace, reiterated with an absurd intensity their faith in what is known as the doctrine of Monroe, we should not have believed that, even in the mixed mind of Woodrow Wilson himself, the policy was anything more than a curiosity. It would have seemed to us as sensible to carry to Paris brief abstracts of Mr Gladstone's forgotten policies. If ever there was a need of the Monroe Doctrine, that need has long passed away, and a first glance at Brazil, rich and independent, suggests that it needs not the tutelage of a foreign power, alien from it in blood, sympathy, and intellect. However, the Americans when they went to Paris took their doctrine with them. It is strange that they did not take the *Mayflower* also. And we cannot but think, as we wander by the spacious harbour of Rio de Janeiro, what the Monroe Doctrine still means to North America and to South.

Its origin and purpose are familiar to all. Though it bears the name of the President, in whose message to Congress it made its first appearance, the credit of it does not belong solely to him. George Canning thought it. Did he not call the new world into being to redress the balance of the old? John Quincy Adams, Monroe's Secretary of State, was its eloquent advocate. What was it precisely, and what was its purpose? The policy may be briefly defined as the policy of "America for the Americans." But here it is as it first, in 1823, left the hand of President Monroe himself: "The American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonisation by European Powers. We should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European Power we have not interfered, and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their independence, and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and as first principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling, in any other manner, their destiny, by any European Power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States."

There is the precious policy itself, which has passed from a policy into a law, and from a law of man, according to the sentimental practice of the United States, into a law of nature. Wherever the American politician goes, he carries the Monroe Doctrine in his

pocket. The mere mention of it adds immensely to his self-satisfaction. It is a shield and buckler of self-esteem. It has a foremost place in messages to Congress, and in speeches delivered defiantly in the Senate. The mere fact that the United States by not keeping its own side of the bargain, by making war upon Spain in 1898, in defiance of its declaration that "with the existing colonies or dependencies of any European Power we have not interfered, and shall not interfere," has rendered the doctrine of no effect, is wholly indifferent to President Monroe's successors. The doctrine is a piece of jargon which, until it be replaced by another, cannot be dispensed with. It is still shouted from a thousand platforms, and so far from being modified by the years, which should have abolished it, it has had new meanings attached to it, of which neither Monroe nor George Canning ever thought.

It began as a purely defensive measure. The United States made itself the guardian of its neighbours, who it thought might fall a prey to the machinations of the Holy Alliance, that ill-omened forerunner of the League of Nations. It claimed at the outset no right of interference in the affairs of the South Americans. It was full of benevolence and lofty thoughts. But as the years passed, and with them passed the very meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, they still cling with a feverish persistence to the empty words, which are no longer a policy. That Europe should interfere in the affairs or the constitution of South America was no longer possible. Brazil and the Argentine needed no protection. "Since there are no longer rain-clouds coming up from the East," said a South American, quoted by Lord Bryce, "why should a friend, however well-intentioned, insist on holding an umbrella over us? We are quite able to do that for ourselves if necessary."

Why, indeed, should the United States hold up the umbrella? For no reason, except one which always seems relevant to the demagogue. The Monroe Doctrine, though it had lost its significance, has become what the politicians call a shibboleth, a palladium, or a war-cry, according to their taste in imagery. The spell-binders of America still want something to talk about. Some of the gilt had been rubbed off Thomas Jefferson's glittering generalities. And the Monroe Doctrine suits the popular orator very well indeed. It gives him the chance, as he thinks, to threaten and command. "Hands off South America," he shouts to the effete unheeding nations of Europe, who have no desire to put their hands on. "If you outrage our sacred doctrine, even in thought, then shall you feel the might of America's wrath." And Europe, smiling, goes upon her way.

The doctrine, in truth, became moribund, and obviously something had to be done to revivify the moribund doctrine. The chance offered itself in 1895, when Mr Olney, in the name of Monroe, espoused the side of Venezuela in a dispute which that country had with Great Britain. The Americans, aflame with patriotism, defied Great Britain and all its power. War might have been the immediate result, had not Lord Salisbury been there to prove at once his strength and his geniality. The United States had already appointed a boundary commission in an affair which did not concern it. Lord Salisbury ignored the commission, negotiated directly with Venezuela, and won the case for Great Britain. In the end both sides were satisfied. President Cleveland and Mr Olney had blustered and threatened a vast deal; the sacred doctrine of Monroe had ever been upon their tongues and in their despatches; and Great Britain had got the justice which she demanded. Thirteen years later an American journalist had described the disputes in these terms, which seem divorced as far as possible from the truth: "Lord Salisbury and the British Government came down from their high horse, the British lion slunk away with its much-twisted tail between its legs, and England agreed to arbitrate the boundary dispute. England got most of the territory it claimed in the final outcome, but it got it by a judicial decree, and not by force of arms. From the day that President Monroe sent that message to Congress, the nations of Europe have looked upon the United States in a different light. The Monroe Doctrine, which is the foremost positive feature of our foreign policy, is no longer a toy with which we are graciously permitted to amuse ourselves, but it is an accepted factor in international polity, which commands the respect of all the world." [1]

The episode of Venezuela, which in no way touched the sacred doctrine, resulted perversely in setting the doctrine on its legs again, or rather on other legs (of wood), which did not belong to it. Henceforth, as we have said, the Monroe Doctrine ceased to be a matter of policy, and became in the eyes of zealous Americans a part and parcel of international law. Its partisans clung to it with a greater ferocity as its necessity receded from the plane of real things. Mr Olney and his friends, emboldened by a victory which was no victory at all, insisted firstly that "the United States is practically sovereign on this continent," secondly, that the states of South America are the com-

[1] We owe this quotation, and much else, to Mr Hiram Bingham's 'The Monroe Doctrine, an Obsolete Shibboleth,' an admirably sound discussion of the whole question.

mercial and political allies of the United States, to which they are bound by the ties of natural sympathy. Thus far had the United States travelled from the peace doctrine of Monroe in seventy years.

That South America should resent the claim of sovereignty put forward by the United States, was but natural. No high-spirited state, such as Brazil, the Argentine, or Chile, could for a moment tolerate so gross a pretension. The republics of South America are independent in act and word. They are growing in accord with their own views and their own traditions, which are in no sense the views and traditions of the United States. It is no question of proximity or identity of race. Since the canal has been cut at Panama, it is inapposite to speak of one continent. In what, then, does the Sovereignty of the United States consist, and how has the United States served what in its political jargon it calls the cause of "liberty" if it has replaced the risk, reduced to a minimum, of European interference, by an openly acknowledged domination of its own? Its policy, indeed, seems no part of Monroe's policy. Rather it is part of that strange desire to meddle in the affairs of other people, which persuades it to discuss, impartially, in the Senate and in the press the domestic affairs of England and Ireland.

So President after President of the United States has proclaimed his responsibility for the good conduct of South America, and has supported vigorously a policy of intervention in the affairs of foreign states. Thus has the United States arrogated to itself the right of managing foreign states, which Monroe expressly denied to others. None has been more open in his claim of dominion than President Roosevelt. "Chronic wrong-doing," said he, talking of South America, "or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilised society, may, in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilised nation, and in the western hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrong-doing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police force." It would not be easy for one nation to insult a group of other nations more loudly than was done in this pronouncement of President Roosevelt, and the storm of anger which he aroused in South America showed him clearly that he had gone too far. "An idea had become prevalent," said he presently, "that our assertion of the Monroe Doctrine implied, or carried with it, an assumption of superiority, and of a right to exercise some kind of protectorate over the countries to whose territory that doctrine applies. Nothing could be farther from the

truth." Indeed, it was too late to make an effective contradiction. Mr Roosevelt had enunciated at the top of his voice the right of the United States to interfere in the affairs of South America, as it chose, and if the impression, which he had made deliberately, was "a serious barrier to good understanding, to friendly intercourse, to the introduction of American capital, and the extension of American trade," it was Mr Roosevelt's fault, and none other's. His contradiction was ineffective, because it showed too plainly where the shoe of the United States was pinching, and because an injury done to another's pride cannot be assuaged merely by substituting one statement for another. How shall the offended one pick and choose between the sincerity of this statement and that? Why should he elect to believe the wholly interested apology rather than the arrogant declaration of the man with the big stick?

The indiscretion of Mr Roosevelt was not effaced by the diplomacy of Mr Root. In vain did that statesman give to South America the fine flowers of his oratory. He seemed to protest too much, to mix, perhaps with too little delicacy, the benefits of trade and the blessings of friendship. "We can both aid each other," said he at Bahia, "by the peaceful exchanges of trade. Our trade — yes, our trade is valuable, and may it increase; may it increase to the wealth and prosperity of both nations. But there is something more than trade; there is the aspiration to make life worth the living, that uplifts humanity. To accomplish success in this is the goal which we seek to attain. There is the happiness of life, and what is trade if it does not bring happiness to life?" Mr Root's protest was belated, and it seems to us that in speaking to Bahia in the sentimental jargon of the United States, he mistook his audience. South America, with the clear-cut logic which it owes to its Latin ancestry, is not to be over-persuaded by references to the "uplift." It speaks a better, clearer language, and it does not believe that words of offence may be wiped away in an instant by the sponge of sentimentality. It remembers only that it has been the victim of Yankee patronage, that it has suffered as England has suffered by the interference of a nation which has yet to put its own house in order, and its resentment cannot be appeased in an instant by a few honeyed words. It is in vain that Mr Root perorates of friendship, when Mr Taft thinks it proper to declare that "the frontiers of the United States virtually extend to Tierra del Fuego," and when Mr Wilson, of ill-omened memory, travels to Europe with the Monroe Doctrine, that instrument of unwelcome patronage, in his portmanteau.

At any rate, the statesmen of South America do not share the bland opinions of Messrs Roosevelt and Root. They are well able to take care of themselves, and they would that the whole world knew it. Here, for instance, is the opinion of an Argentine judge, quoted by Mr Hiram Bingham: "It is both convenient and necessary that we should declare in virile and dignified language to the United States that we are not disposed to admit her right of tutelage. It is too imperialistic—too degrading to ourselves and our neighbours, who are worthy of being respected by the United States as well as by the cultivated powers of Europe. To be sure, in our territories there still exist, in distant provinces, tribes of savages, just as in the United States. Nevertheless, we respect the right of the individual and his property, and our generous laws contain ample guarantees and offer full privileges to aliens who desire to establish themselves on our rich lands. The fruit of their labour is guaranteed to them by the justice of our courts. They themselves will be better for coming in contact with our culture, and their children are welcome in the numerous free public schools which may be found throughout South America."

Thus with dignity and truth speaks the Argentine judge. Now listen to the words of a distinguished Brazilian, who regards the pretensions of the United States as a "pure eccentricity of the kind for which America has become the classic source." "The Monroe Doctrine," says he, "as such, has no value whatever. At best it is simply another document for the benefit of those who would determine the characteristic psychology of the North American. Such a doctrine passes not only for a work very original and very Yankee, but also as being without substance as a whole. . . . What we, nations of South America, should do is, not admit any such doctrine, and treat it, moreover, as if it did not exist." And Mr Wilson took the outworn doctrine with him to Paris!

The Americans attempt to cover up their designs of sovereignty, extending to Tierra del Fuego, with soft words about the extension of trade and reciprocal commerce. But no doctrine of Monroe or any other is necessary for the exchange of commodities. South America will trade with whom she pleases; she will accept those as clients with less eagerness perhaps, who affect to patronise her or to throw over her an inefficient and unwelcome ægis. Nor is there a word to be said in favour of the "natural sympathy" which Monroe's successors pretend to exist between North and South America. If you would search the world over for a natural antipathy, surely you would not find it more plainly indicated than here. There is no link

of mutual understanding which can bind together the Spanish and Portuguese adventurers who came to the Argentine and Brazil on voyages of discovery with the fanatical pilgrim fathers, who sought in a new country a free exercise for their habit of religious persecution. In race, in tradition, in intention, North and South are widely severed. The South Americans look back willingly to their Latin ancestry. They have the same sense of logic, the same love of warmth and pleasure, which distinguished their forebears. They are far from despising wealth and the comfort and security which wealth beings. But they are not willing to sacrifice, as are thousands of North Americans, the amenity of life, and the cultivation of the intellect, to the worship of the dollar. Above all, the capital of their mind is not London nor New York. It is Paris, whither the artists of South America flock eagerly for inspiration and example, and where the coffee-planter of Brazil or the rancher of the Argentine most gladly seeks the pleasures which his prosperity purchases for him.

The Monroe Doctrine, therefore, we may take to be politically and morally dead. If the United States consults its own advantage, it will bury it quietly out of the way, and leave the place of its sepulture unmarked by a headstone. But its persistence reinforces the truth that in politics a phrase, a word, a name, or a doctrine may outlive by many years its meaning or its efficacy. Nor is it strange that our demagogues should not deal with reality. Though they tell us that their object is the proper government of the country, we know well enough (and they know better) that their real business is the gathering of votes. And votes are gathered not by argument, not by the exposition of the truth, but by words which catch the ear of the mob. The Monroe Doctrine! Doesn't it sound well! And how little it means! It is fit in all senses to take its place beside "freedom," "equality," and the other loud sounds which come forth from the mouth of the political gramophone at the bidding of anxious candidates. Were it understood, did it contain anything worth understanding, its value would be instantly decreased, and no doubt it will do good and facile service at Washington, until one day the United States finds it prudent to abstain from the further irritation of South America.

If we have no Monroe Doctrine of our own, even if by admitting the converse we allow the United States to meddle with the rebellion in Ireland, we, too, have been governed and are still governed by words and phrases, which sound as loudly and mean as little as does the Monroe Doctrine. How many follies have been perpetrated in the name of a thing called "free trade," which long

ceased to be a financial policy, and has seemed in the pious eyes of those who understand it not a short cut to the saving of their souls! Again, there is the highly vaunted "nationalisation," which the Socialists have told us would pay for the war, and which has cost us already so vast a sum that our brief experiment in it will hold us bankrupt for many a day. Yet the word sounds no less sweetly in the ears of the fanatics, who comprehend it not, than it did in the days when its power for evil was as yet untried. The mob, as we have said, wants words and words only, and in "nationalisation" it found the same soothing power which the American imperialist still finds in the blessed name—Monroe Doctrine.

And as in politics we accept words without considering their meaning, so we accept leaders without considering their character or capacity. We want figure-heads to represent as well as phrases to indicate our emotions. The figure-heads, to be successful, must mean no more than the phrases. It is enough if the mob sees its favourite in the street or pictured in the journals. As soon as the mob is familiar with its idol's aspect, it pronounces the idol indispensable, and is no less sure that the world would come to an end were the idol shattered, than the American is certain that the future of his country is bound up with the piece of mysticism known as the Monroe Doctrine. Yet the doctrine of indispensability can never be sustained. When the idol is shattered, there is immediately felt an immense relief. For many a year did we not proclaim Mr Asquith the one necessity of our blood and State? Did not Mr Asquith acquiesce eagerly in the proclamation? And who shall forget the complete satisfaction which was felt and manifested at his retirement? To-day Mr Lloyd George and his friends are preaching a similar gospel. With tears in their voices, with all the unction of the tabernacle, they assure us that if Mr Lloyd George be not tenant for life of Downing Street the world will fall in ruins about our ears. In other words, Mr Lloyd George is for the moment our Monroe Doctrine.

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